Dissertationes Forestales 309

Legitimacy of forest policy – concept analysis and empirical applications in Finland

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Academic Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the political legitimacy of forest and forest-related nature conservation policies in Finland. Legitimacy is defined here that the forest and nature conservation regimes and related political institutions are perceived as rightful among the people.

The major contribution of this study is the comprehensive conceptual framework of legitimacy based on several theories, mainly from political science. The framework analyzes the objects of support, patterns of legitimacy, performance evaluations, and how these relate to one another. In this study, the objects of support refer to forest-related political institutions; these include regulations and public incentives, as well as decision-making processes, political programs, and administrative procedures. The framework is intended to be especially useful in the empirical analyses of pluralistic public political discussion and uses a methodology developed for this purpose. The study also analyses the social values of organized political actors.

The empirical part of this study explores a data set from Finnish print media discourse, based on letters to editors in three newspapers and in one journal, along with comments given during the preparation of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010. Another empirical data set consists of qualitative semi-structured interviews and the writings of the organized interest groups.

Many different groups of citizens were found to participate in public discussion on forests. Quite a large number of individuals shared the overall publicity, despite the fact that there were some very active writers. Nature conservation organizations, researchers, and politicians were well represented. However, the participation of governmental officials from both the forest and environmental sectors can be characterized as insufficient, considering their importance in the implementation of policies.

The study of letters to editors found that groups of common social values served as patterns of legitimacy in the performance evaluations of forest policies. These include welfare and wellbeing derived from forests; values related to nature conservation; democratic values; distributive justice; good governance; core regime principles; and fair markets. Of all performance evaluations, 52% were negative while 26% were positive and 22 % were mixed.

The welfare of citizens and the nation, export incomes and employment were the most common justifications used in the legitimacy evaluations while economic growth was a topic that divided opinions. Principles related to values of nature and sustainable development were almost as common in the data. A common argument related to the wellbeing of future generations combined the ideas of benefits and nature values with the idea of distributive justice.

Democratic values, especially the public participation of the involved groups of people and public deliberation were common sources of legitimacy. Most political actors supported the ideal of conciliatory decision-making, while smaller group preferred strictness and non-compromising political action.

Private property rights and the so-called everyman's right were found to be strong supporting arguments. In addition to the recognition of private ownership of forests, they were on the other hand perceived as national heritage. The perceived fairness of the distribution of benefits and burdens was mostly based on comparisons between people or

groups of people; these include countryside vs. cities, Finland vs. foreign countries, forestry vs. other forest user groups, and present vs. future generations.

Both forest and nature conservation-related public administration faced positive and negative feedback. Public officials were expected to obey domestic and international legislation and to oversee the implementation of laws in an impartial and consistent manner. On the contrary, perceived arbitrariness, paternalism, and disrespectful behavior by officials were perceived as illegitimate.

Concerning the markets, the rules of fair competition were often mentioned as a source of legitimacy, while monopolies and cartels were mentioned as sources of illegitimacy.

In the interviews of organized actors, the forestry actors maintained that the central sources of legitimacy are the benefits for the national economy, employment and export incomes, as well as property rights and the value of nature in terms of its benefit for humans while the nature conservation-oriented actors had an understanding that nature has an intrinsic value independent of its benefits to people. Lack of trust was characteristic of the polarized policy field. However, traditional rights of ownership, everyman's right, and citizens' rights to influence forest policy comprised a common ground between the actors.

Domestic, EU-level, and international legality were commonly perceived as sources of the legitimacy of policies. Finland's good international standing and its role as a moral and economic forerunner were very common principles in the evaluations in both the forest and nature conservation policies, in all parts of data. The same idea was also found central in the national forest programs and strategies. The shared goal of the Finns seems to be that the nation would be best in the world both in forest and nature conservation policies.

Despite some disagreements concerning the performance of institutions, most of the social values that serve as a basis of legitimacy seem to be quite commonly supported in Finland, where support of major governmental institutions and general trust among people are at a relatively high level. The value discussion related to forests is part of a larger discussion on social values that seems to continue far into the future.

Keywords: forest policy, nature conservation policy, political legitimacy, democracy, justice, public discussion

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan Suomen metsäpolitiikan ja metsiin liittyvän luonnonsuojelupolitiikan legitimiteettiä kansalaisten ja metsäpolitiikan toimijoiden mieltämänä. Tutkimuksen kontekstissa legitimiteetillä tarkoitetaan ensisijaisesti, että kansalaiset pitävät metsiin liittyvää vallankäyttöä sekä säätelyssä käytettyjä lakeja ja politiikkaohjelmia oikeudenmukaisena.

Tutkimuksen kiinnekohtana toimii varsin kokonaisvaltainen viitekehys, joka rakentuu pääasiassa valtiotieteelliselle teoriapohjalle, mutta mahdollistaa eri tieteenalojen teorioiden yhdistämisen. Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan, millä perusteilla ihmiset arvioivat metsiin liittyviä säädöksiä, päätöksentekoprosesseja, poliittisia ohjelmia ja alan hallintoa. Tutkimuksessa sovellettua teoriakehikkoa ja tutkimusmenetelmää voidaan käyttää myös muiden alojen tutkimuksessa ja sen laaja ja yksityiskohtainen käsitteistö soveltuu varsinkin julkisten politiikkakeskustelujen empiiriseen analyysiin.

Tutkimuksen empiirisessä osassa analysoitiin aineistoa lehtien yleisönosastokeskusteluista ja Kansallisen metsäohjelman kirjallisia kommentteja. Lisäksi tutkittiin metsäpolitiikan organisoituneiden toimijoiden arvokäsityksiä haastatteluiden ja kirjallisten aineistojen pohjalta.

Metsäpolitiikkakeskustelun julkisuus jakautui varsin tasaisesti ja monipuolisesti erilaisia näkökantoja edustavien kansalaisten välille, vaikkakin eräät yksittäiset kirjoittajat havaittiin poikkeuksellisen aktiivisiksi. Luonnonsuojelujärjestöjen edustajat, tutkijat ja poliitikot olivat varsin hyvin edustettuina. Sen sijaan metsä- ja luonnonsuojeluhallinnon edustajat osallistuivat keskusteluun melko vähän ottaen huomioon heidän suuren merkityksensä politiikan käytännön toimeenpanijoina.

Hyvinvointiin, luonnonsuojeluun, demokratiaan, erilaisten hyötyjen ja haittojen oikeudenmukaiseen jakamiseen, hyvään hallintoon, perusoikeuksiin ja markkinoiden reiluihin pelisääntöihin liittyvät arvot olivat tavallisimpia perusteita, joita käytettiin politiikan onnistumisen arvioissa. Yleisönosastokeskustelu oli kriittisesti sävyttynyttä — tehdyistä arvioista 52% oli negatiivisia ja 26% positiivisia, kun taas 22% arvioi asian eri puolia ottamatta selvää kantaa puolesta tai vastaan.

Hyvinvointi ymmärrettiin useimmiten kansantalouden, vientitulojen ja työllisyyden kautta, mutta talouden kasvuhakuisuuden tavoiteltavuus jakoi mielipiteitä. Luonnonsuojelu arvoon ja kestävään kehitykseen liittyvät puheenvuorot olivat myös erittäin yleisiä. Tulevien sukupolvien oikeudenmukainen osuus hyvinvoinnista ja luonnon säilyttäminen heille oli myös yleinen perustelu hyvälle politiikalle.

Demokraattisille arvoille löytyi erittäin laajaa kannatusta. Sekä laajaa osallistumista että laajaa järkiperäistä julkista keskustelua pidettiin onnistuneen politiikan merkkeinä. Suuri osa yleisönosastokirjoittajista ja haastatelluista henkilöistä kannatti erilaisia näkökulmia sovittelevaa päätöksentekoa, mutta pienempi osa piti parempana tinkimättömämpää linjaa poliittisessa toiminnassa.

Metsiin liittyvät oikeudet, kuten yksityinen omistusoikeus ja jokamiehenoikeus olivat tavallisia lähtökohtia hyväksi mielletylle politiikalle. Monien mielestä metsät ovat kuitenkin myös kansallisomaisuutta, josta täytyy pitää hyvää huolta. Metsien käyttöön liittyvien hyötyjen ja haittojen oikeudenmukaisesta jakautumisesta käytiin vilkasta keskustelua, jossa oli tavallista arvioida jakautumista eri ihmisryhmien välillä. Olennaisiksi

jakolinjoiksi miellettiin muun muassa maaseutu vs. kaupunki, Suomi vs. ulkomaat, metsätalouden harjoittajat vs. virkistyskäyttäjät ja nykyiset vs. tulevat sukupolvet.

Sekä metsäalan että luonnonsuojelun hallinto saivat kiittävää ja moittivaa palautetta. Hyvältä hallinnolta odotettiin lakien noudattamista ja toisaalta heidän odotettiin valvovan puolueettomasti ja yhdenmukaisella tavalla sekä ulkomaisen että kotimaisen lainsäädännön toteutumista metsäasioissa. Hyvän hallinnon vastakohdiksi miellettiin muun muassa mielivaltaisuus, holhoavuus ja viranomaisten epäkunnioittava käytös.

Metsiin liittyviltä markkinoilta odotettiin mahdollisuutta reiluun kilpailuun, tämän vastakohdaksi mainittiin monopolimaiseksi ja kartellimaiseksi mielletty toiminta.

Haastateltujen metsäalan organisoituneiden toimijoiden keskeinen arvomaailma liittyi talouteen ja työllisyyteen - myös luonnonsuojelua arvostettiin, mutta ensisijaisesti hyötynäkökulman kautta. Luontotoimijoiden keskeinen metsiin liittyvä arvomaailma sen sijaan rakentui enemmän luonnon itseisarvojen ympärille. Toimijoiden välejä luonnehti luottamuksen puute.

Toiminnan laillisuutta kotimaisen EU:n ja kansainvälisen lainsäädännön valossa pidettiin tärkeänä. Erityisesti Suomen hyvä maine sekä moraalinen ja taloudellinen edelläkävijyys korostuivat onnistuneen politiikan lähtökohtina kaikissa osissa aineistoa ja myös useissa metsään liittyvissä kansallisissa politiikkaohjelmissa. Tavoitteelle, että Suomi olisi maailman paras sekä metsätaloudessa että luonnonsuojelussa, on laajaa kannatusta.

Tutkimuksessa eriteltiin metsäpolitiikkaan liittyviä erimielisyyttä aiheuttavia asioita, mutta on kaikkiaan hyvä huomata, että huolimatta vaihtelevista käsityksistä instituutioiden toimivuudesta on suomalaisilla varsin laajasti jaettu arvopohja sekä suhteellisen korkea luottamus julkiseen valtaan ja toisiinsa. Metsäkeskustelu on osa laajempaa keskustelua yhteisistä arvoista ja yhteiskunnan suunnasta — nämä keskustelut jatkunevat vilkkaina tulevaisuudessakin.

Avainsanat: metsäpolitiikka, luonnonsuojelupolitiikka, poliittinen legitimiteetti, demokratia, oikeudenmukaisuus, julkinen keskustelu

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Tapio Rantala

Vanhakaupunki, November 2020

LIST OF ORIGINAL ARTICLES

This thesis is based on the following original research articles, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals. All articles are reprinted with the permission of the publishers.

I Rantala T. (2012). Legitimacy of forest and nature conservation policy: A conceptual framework with illustrations. Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research 27(2): 164–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/02827581.2012.657008

II Rantala, T. (2011). Democratic legitimacy of forest and nature conservation decision-making in Finnish print media discussion. Silva Fennica 45(1): 111-138. https://doi.org/10.14214/sf.35

III Rantala T., Primmer E. (2003). Value positions based on forest policy stakeholders' rhetoric in Finland. Environmental Science and Policy 6(3): 205–216. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1462-9011(03)00040-6

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Articles I and **II** are sole contributions by Rantala.

Article III was developed and written by the two authors together. Rantala had the original research idea and he led the research process. The interviews comprising the primary data were planned together and Rantala conducted and transcribed the interviews except one which was conducted together and transcribed by Primmer. Rantala led the analysis of the primary data. Primmer collected and analyzed the secondary document data. Rantala wrote the first version of the manuscript, except section 2 that was first written by Primmer.

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LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS

Political legitimacy refers generally to the rightfulness and acceptability of political authority. In the context of forest policy it means that the forest and nature conservation regimes are perceived as rightful, and that the related political institutions (such as regulations and public incentives, as well as decision-making processes, forest-related programs, and administrative procedures) are perceived as rightful among the people.

Normative legitimacy is an approach developed and justified by researchers of philosophy and political science for the evaluation of the rightfulness of political arrangements.

Descriptive legitimacy (or empirical legitimacy**)** is an approach that studies how subjects of power (such as people in general, citizens, civic groups, and political elites) or those in power (including governmental officials and elected politicians) perceive the rightfulness of political rule.

Public institution refers in this study to a formal rule system created by the legislative assembly or by governmental initiative; these include legislative regulations and public incentives, as well as decision-making processes, political programs, administrative procedures, and civic education.

Concepts can be defined as abstract ideas or general notions that occur in the mind, in speech, or in documented form. They are understood to be the fundamental building blocks of thoughts and beliefs. Several disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, social and political sciences, as well as philosophy are interested in the logical and psychological structure of concepts, and how they may be combined to form thoughts and sentences.

Essentially contested concept refers to the philosophical idea that a widespread agreement on a concept (such as justice, good, democracy, and sustainable development) may exist, but political theorists or other actors support different *conceptions* regarding the justification of said concept because they have fundamental difficulties in agreeing on its best realization, whether by reasoning or by using empirical evidence.

Social values are values that are largely shared by members of a community or culture, even if each member's personal views do not entirely agree with some of these values. Another close concept is *regime principle* which is a theoretical concept of political science related to governmental public policies; in this study it refers to all normative principles found in the data when analyzing people's evaluations of policies. These findings are further summarized as groups of normative principles of which a group titled as *core regime principles* is one sub-class in this study. The terms *value* and *principle* are used synonymously in this study and they are comprehensible in all theoretical and empirical contexts applied here.

Democracy is a form of government in which the involved people have at least theoretically equal possibility to choose their governing rule system, especially the legislation.

Core regime principles refer to basic rights, often also called liberal-democratic values, such as freedoms, human rights, equality, legality, and property rights (What are preconditions for democracy, basic rights, and sources of legality?). Everyman's rights (traditional Finnish rights to access natural areas) are also included in this class in this study.

Input legitimacy refers to the process of decision-making, in particular to the actors involved and the procedures followed (Who is involved in setting the agenda, and how is the agenda formulated?).

Throughput legitimacy of political processes is associated with how decisions ought to be made, i.e. decision rules (How should decisions be made?).

Output legitimacy refers to the intended and unintended results of the process, their quality and consequences (What are the substantial outcomes, and what is their contribution to the input?).

Justice means generally that people ought to receive what they are entitled to, or deserve, on the basis of who they are and what they have done.

Procedural justice (or procedural fairness) is focused on the fairness and transparency of decision-making processes and administrative procedures.

Distributive justice is concerned with fairness in the distribution of rights or resources, as well as the distribution of burdens, often based on comparisons between people or groups of people.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Case of Finland and importance of forests

> Thus the creation of a forest policy is a process which should involve all groups and institutions with a direct or indirect say in the forest or with responsibility for implementing the policy. It should not be hurried, both because its purpose is to educate and engage, and because it must lead in due course of legislation and to machinery of enforcing compliance. Justice and democracy both require that the policy should be fully discussed, and this means that it must set out in the language which can be readily understood.
>
> Jack Westoby in *Introduction to World Forestry: People and their Trees* (1989)

This study analyzes the legitimacy of forest and forest-related nature conservation policies in Finland. The motivation of the study lies in the rising call for a more open, more participatory, and more sustainable society that predominates public discussion, and has also been reflected in the forest sector. At this point, only scant scholarly work has studied these phenomena empirically or theoretically in the forest sector. One promising possibility in conceptualizing societal development in the forest and environmental sector is the application of theories of legitimacy and democracy (Bäckstrand 2006b; Engelen et al. 2008; Pickering 2020). Some political concepts, such as ecological, economic, and social sustainability, are central declamatory statements both in practical policy-making and in academic policy studies today, and they are also closely related to concepts of legitimacy and democracy. However, the roots of the mindset as such can be traced back at least to the Enlightenment, with its ideas of public participation and reasoning through public discussion; the great social contract theorists — Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant — all held that for a political order to be legitimate it had to be agreed upon by or justified for each person publicly (Vallier 2018).

The meaning of abstract political concepts are defined and redefined to a large extent through public discussion, which often precedes the specification of these concepts as generally accepted social values; and further, mainstreaming and institutionalizing them into legislation. By studying public discussion it is also possible to figure out how the general public perceives these values. An understanding of legitimacy and the related vocabulary is important to every policy actor and professional in the forest and nature conservation sectors of the current Western societal climate, in which the acceptability of governmental institutions seems to be continuously challenged. A comprehension of legitimacy is also needed in understanding the nature of forest-related conflicts, which seem to occur relatively independently from the development of legislation and other rule systems as well as the practical activities conducted in forests.

The empirical data comes from Finland but a large part of this study has been designed so that the theorization, research methods, and coding can be applied with case-specific modifications in the legitimacy studies anywhere and in principle by almost any discipline. The results are comparable at least partly to other similar countries and maybe to other policy sectors, as well. The following sections will describe the context wherein the Finnish forest policy discussion occurs.

By its constitutional structure, Finland is a sovereign liberal democratic state with both a relatively free market economy and a Nordic-style broad social security system. According to the OECD (2020a, 2020b), Finland had experienced over a decade of slow economic development even before the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the financial crisis that began in 2008; during the research period there was a stage of stagnation at the turn of the millennium, but when growth took off in 2001, the economic development was relatively rapid. Incomes are relatively high but the affordability and wealth of households are relatively low. The inequality in the distribution of wealth in Finland is one of the lowest among comparative countries. The unemployment rate was above the OECD average for over a decade, and at the time of writing in 2020 it has been rapidly rising. The voter turnout in the national elections has been quite stable, being 69 % in 2019, the same as the average among most Western countries.

Slightly under half of the population feels they have a say in what the government does (one typical indicator in measurements of legitimacy), which appears to be a low figure but is actually well over the average of 34 % in the OECD countries (OECD 2020a, 2020b),. By PISA measure, both the literacy and numeracy skills of school students are second highest in the world. Overall life satisfaction is reportedly high. The quality and availability of natural environments is among the best and the environmental inequalities are among the lowest in the OECD countries (OECD 2020c). In summary, the average quality of life as measured in the statistics and as perceived by the population has been relatively good in Finland during the data collection period for this study, in the early 2000s.

Historically speaking, Finland has been exceptionally dependent on utilizing forests, first as a source of food, energy, and clothing; building material for houses, saunas, and boats; for slash-and-burn agriculture and pastures; and later in the export of forest products, such as tar and timber; not to mention an array of spiritual purposes. An increase in governmental control of Finnish forests started gradually, when in 1542 Gustav Vasa, the King of Sweden, stated that all uninhabited wilderness areas in his kingdom belong to God, the King, and the Crown; an act which began the practice of state land ownership in these areas. Private forest ownership was developed gradually by establishing farms and villages that in earlier stage used the forests collectively but later split these lands between private farms (Parpola & Åberg 2009).

By the beginning of the 19th century, Finnish forests were already in full use, and steam sawmills needed more and more wood both for sawing and energy. The wood use became so widespread that the officials were concerned about the disappearance of Finland's forests. Forest administration started to develop in the mid 19th century, and the very first Forest Act in 1886 prohibited the destruction of forests. Later in the 20th century this resulted in organized forestry and forest administration. There has been constant tension among different forest user groups, and between them and the state, concerning state-owned lands as well as between private forest owners and public administration (Kuisma 1993; Parpola & Åberg 2009).

By the early 21th century, the recovered forestry land canopied as much as 86 percent of the land area of Finland (Natural... 2020a). The annual growth on forest land and poorly productive forest land totals 108 million m^3. From the early 20th century, the amount of growing stock in Finland has increased by over 60 percent (despite the fact that over 10% of most productive forests were lost in the Soviet seizure of parts of eastern Finland in 1944). The roundwood harvests were 73.3 million m^3 in 2019, which is 13% higher than the average of the preceding ten-year period. The total roundwood drain of 88 million m^3 comprises roundwood removals, as well as naturally died stemwood and the stemwood of

logging residues left in the forest, and the volume of growing stock increased by more than 19 million m^3 (Natural... 2020d). Clearcuttings are made annually in around 0.5-0.7% of forest land while thinnings are over three times more common (Vaahtera 2018: 16-56).

In the present situation, as many as 620,000 private persons — 11% of the population — solely or jointly owned 344,000 forest estates of over two hectares in 2016 (Natural... 2020b, 2020c). The average size of these possessions is only 30.5 hectares and the share of forest holdings over 100 hectares in size is only 5%. Private persons own 60% of Finland's forest area while the state owns 26% of all forest land, and companies (including the forest industry) own 8%, and jointly owned forests have 3% and municipalities 2%. State forests are for the most part located in northern and eastern Finland; large parts of them are less productive land and 45% of state forests are under strict protection as national parks, also serving as popular recreation areas. Private persons have often inherited their estates, and the same family had in many instances owned the estate for many generations. In addition to incomes from timber harvesting, many forest owners also appreciate nature and recreation in their own forests; however, the emphasis of the major goal of forest ownership varies (Karppinen 2000).

The forest sector labor force in 2019 totaled 69,000 people, of whom the number of employed persons amounted to 66,000 (Natural... 2020e). The labor force of forest industries was 40,000 people, divided evenly between wood product industries as well as the pulp and paper industries, and the labor force in forestry was 26,000 persons, of whom 12,000 persons were self-employed and unpaid family workers that worked primarily on their own estate. Furthermore, as many as 150 million seedlings are planted in Finland each year, which is a popular summer job, especially for the rural youth.

Total output of Finnish forest sector was EUR 25.98 billion in 2017 (Vaahtera 2018: 173). Earnings from raw wood sales totaled EUR 2.31 billion in 2019, of which non-industrial private forest owners received EUR 2.01 billion, while the earnings of forest industry companies and the state were EUR 0.30 billion (Natural... 2020f). In 2018, the turnover of the forest industry was EUR 32.7 billion and the operating margin of the forest industry was 8.6% of the total domestic operating income (Natural... 2020g). In 2017, the total value of forest industry product exports was EUR 12.08 billion, or 20% of Finland's total goods export (Vaahtera 2018: 150, 164). The total value added produced by forestry and the forest industries was EUR 8.4 billion in 2017, which is 4.4% of the total value added in the national economy, and with the multiplier effects it was much bigger. Compared to most other countries with intensive forestry and a large-scale forest industry, industrial wood in Finland is collected through relatively small-sized logging operations (the total number of different operations is as high as 150,000), but the all parts of harvesting chain are profitable nonetheless.

Finland has 2.9 million hectares of protected forests (Natural... 2020h). The area of protected forests consists of forests in statutory protected areas (2.4 million hectares, mostly in eastern and northern parts of the country) and biodiversity conservation sites in commercial forests (0.5 million hectares). The share of protected forest area is between 6% and 18%, depending on whether only the strictly protected productive forest land areas are included or if the less productive areas are also counted in. Furthermore, 0.4 million hectares of areas are in restricted forestry use for supporting the protection of nature values. The number of species in Finland is over 50,000, including all animal, plant, and fungal species; of these, some 20,000 live in forests (Natural... 2020i). Of all Finnish species, around 2,250 are classified as threatened to some degree, and of these, forest is the primary

habitat for 814 species and peatlands for 104 species (Vaahtera 2018: 34). The share of protected areas in Finland is among the largest in Europe (Ayanz et al. 2015).

Outdoor recreation in nature involves a majority of Finns, and large part of such activities take place in forests (Natural... 2020j) which is enabled by broad everyman's rights (the traditional rights to free access to private land and also to gather berries and mushrooms, see Ministry of Environment 2016). Forest planning that takes into account several activities simultaneously is often called multiple use forest management (Natural... 2020k). The value added by nature tourism and recreation was EUR 1.5 billion in 2017 (Vaahtera 2018: 173), with 35,000 people employed.

To summarize, a common slogan is that all Finns have a personal relationship with forests, and there may be some truth behind this claim (Suomen... 2018). Undoubtedly, it is clear that a large portion of the Finnish population is directly involved in forests through ownership, work life and employment, and/or recreational activities. Finland has a detailed legislation and extensive public administration, meaning that people involved in forests are subjects of governmental regulation by forest and nature conservation policies. This situation stimulates varying kinds of political activity and the willingness to express opinions both privately and publicly. This is further excited by the continually significant importance of forestry to the national economy and export incomes.

1.2 National forest policy: institutions, programs, and governmental organizations

The purpose of a forest policy is defined as having to "enhance the sustainable production of the material and immaterial benefits of forests to serve the needs of all citizens" (Valsta & Kuuluvainen 2009; see also Ellefsson 1992: 14-17; Cubbage et al. 1993: 16-19; Van Kooten & Vertinsky 1998; Krott 2005). While there is no binding international legislation on forests, most forest-related policy-making takes place on the national level. However, the international non-binding agreements and cooperation at the EU-level have also had significant impacts on Finnish policies (Borgström 2018).

Following international legal discussion and the spirit of international environmental declarations and reports (Stockholm Declaration 1972, Brundtland Commission WCED 1987, Rio's process UNCED 1992; see United... 1972, 1987, 1992) environmental basic rights have been included in the Constitution of Finland (731/1999), see details in HE (309/1993). Section 20 declares as follows: "Responsibility for the environment. Nature and its biodiversity, the environment and the national heritage are the responsibility of everyone" and further "The public authorities shall endeavour to guarantee for everyone the right to a healthy environment and for everyone the possibility to influence the decisions that concern their own living environment". These rights related to environment and participation have been classified into so-called third generation human rights or solidarity rights (Vasak 1977; Kuusiniemi 2020) while first-generation human rights (civil and political rights, such as right to life and political participation) refer to the Enlightenment of 1700s and the second-generation to the Declaration of Human Rights 1947 (economic, social, and cultural rights) (United... 1947). Of these generations, the third generation is the most debated and lacks both broad legal and political recognition and its historical narrative has also been considered as an oversimplification.

In domestic forest legislation, Finland has on one hand had a long tradition of detailed rulings concerning the treatment of forests, but on the other hand a comprehensive subsidizing system related to private forest holdings is also maintained (Ollonqvist 1998:

266-285; Kotilainen & Rytteri 2011). This has resulted in the need for large scale implementation and advising organizations. Limitations on forest use, financial support for forestry operations, and the duties and responsibilities of organizations conducting administration and research all have a solid foundation in legislation. In general, forest policy has been developed toward the relaxing of regulations related to forestry, and the increase of environmental regulation.

The most important forest and nature conservation legislation was renewed in 1996, when the Forest Act (1093/1996) and the Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996) were modernized in a simultaneous process that involved many interested actors. The goal of the Forest Act is to "promote economically, ecologically and socially sustainable management and utilization of forests in order that the forests produce a good output in a sustainable way while their biological diversity is being preserved". The partially grant-funded activities in private small-scale forest holdings include, e.g., improvement of young stands, ditch cleaning, and construction of forest roads (see details in Act on the... 1996; Ministry... 2020h; and Kestävän metsätalouden määräaikainen... 2015). The claims for the forest owners' increased freedom of choice were in public discussion during the period of data collection and later in 2014 the legislation was significantly relaxed especially concerning different methods of silviculture (in particular, concerning the limitations of uneven-aged forest management) and limitations on felling. Regardless of the changes in policies, the most important obligation of any forest owner is — and has been since 1886 — to ensure that the new forests will grow in each logged area. The taxation of forests has been based on timber revenues after the transition period in 1993-2005. The Department of Forestry, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, lists no fewer than 53 different acts and decrees related to forestry (Ministry... 2020a, 2020f).

In addition to legislation, Finland has a tradition of serial governmental forest programs following each other (Metz 1993; Ollonqvist 1998; Ministry... 2020b). The forest programs in the 1960s and 1970s were focused on very intensive timber production after felling reached the limits of sustainability in the early 1960s. The most important program started in the period of this study is the National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999), which was prepared by applying a multi-stakeholder decision-making process, at different levels. A large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders were closely involved in the program's preparation. The major objectives of the program were healthy and diverse forests, work and livelihood from profitable forestry and the forest industry, as well as spiritual and cultural recreation in forests. At the regional level, the forest policy objectives were defined in the regional forest programs that were prepared under the supervision of the Forest Centres in collaboration with other parties representing forestry, regional councils, environmental authorities, and other relevant parties (Saarikoski et al. 2010; Borgström 2018). The National Forest Programme 2010 was followed by the National Forest Programme 2015 (Ministry... 2008) and the National Forest Strategy 2025 (Ministry... 2015) (however, not further analyzed in this study).

Even though no binding international legislation on forests exists, the international agreements significantly influence national forest policy and Finland has had an active role in the preparation and implementation of international forest policy (Ministry... 2020d). Finland is an active party, for instance, in the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) work on forests. Important work in the forest sector is being also done at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Finland is also

taking part in the forest cooperation practiced under the Nordic Council of Ministers. In addition to multilateral cooperation, Finland is engaged in bilateral cooperation with some countries. The Forest Europe process (former MCPFE) is also an important form of co-operation and it has developed guidelines, criteria, and indicators for sustainable forest management (Arts et al. 2013; Borgström 2018).

The goal of the Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996) is to: 1) maintain biological diversity; 2) conserve nature's beauty and scenic value; 3) promote the sustainable use of natural resources and the natural environment; 4) promote awareness and general interest in nature; and 5) promote scientific research. The broadening network of national parks has for a long time been the central form of nature conservation (Ministry... 2020c). In private forests, most operations have in practice been controlled by applying Section 10 of the Forest Act (1093/1996), which is a declaration on the protection of especially valuable habitats and prohibited operations. The nature conservation policies are included in this study inasmuch as they are related to forests.

In addition to nature conservation legislation, several other nature conservation programs have also been implemented. The EU's Natura 2000 is a broad nature conservation network that currently covers 13% of Finland's territory (Environment... 2020). Natura 2000 attracted much publicity and resistance (e.g., 15,000 complaints) because the implementation was in many ways unlucky (Hiedanpää 2002; Malmsten 2004; Valtiontalouden... 2007; Unnerstall 2008). However, most of the areas included in the Natura 2000 network already belonged to previous nature conservation programs, and almost 80% of land areas were state-owned. The program was also less strict than previous conservation programs, but communicating it to a national audience failed badly, and through many unfortunate coincidences, it effectively caused the major crisis concerning the legitimacy of nature conservation (Valtiontalouden... 2007).

In order to supplement the legislation and present programs, the 'Forest Biodiversity Programme METSO' (Ympäristöministeriö 2002; Ministry... 2020e) was introduced in 2002 to halt the ongoing decline in the biodiversity of forest habitats and species, and to establish favorable trends especially in Southern Finland's forest ecosystems. Having learned from the previous resistance of conservation on private land, the program is based on voluntary agreements on a temporary or permanent basis that are negotiated between authorities and forest owners and it includes full compensation of economic losses.

The information guidance of private forest owners has also been an essential part of domestic forest policy (Leppänen et al. 2005; Primmer 2010: 30-31). At the time of data collection, the Forest Development Centre Tapio provided forest expert and training services and also maintained (voluntary but influential) 'best practice guidelines for sustainable forest management' (Tapio 2013). At the same time, thirteen Regional Forestry Centres constituted the local public sector forestry administration and were controlling the legality of practical forest operations as well as providing forest planning services in their local areas. The tasks of provisions of services and monitoring the compliance of forest owners were separated into different departments, but these dual roles generated controversy (these organizations were later merged into one central organization, the Finnish Forest Centre in 2012 and the commercial activities were privatized in 2015-2016, see Laki Suomen metsäkeskuksesta 2011/418 and Tapio 2020).

Information guidance is also provided to land-owners by 110 different Forest Management Associations, which are voluntary but semi-official associations that are in close relation to the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK) but are also established by the law (Laki metsänhoitoyhdistyksistä 1998/534). The associations

collected semi-obligatory forest management fees from the forest owners until 2014 when a possibility to provide the forest planning services on a similar commercial basis was opened to all interested actors. Forest planning services are also offered by the forest industry (see more details in Primmer 2010: 30-31). However, the evaluations concerning Forest Management Associations, forest industry and other private actors have not been included in the empirical analysis of this study.

Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that manages state forests in Finland (Ministry... 2020g). It is in charge of state-owned forests both in order to supply wood to the forest industry and to manage most of the protected areas of Finland. The company manages 120,000 square kilometres of state-owned land and water areas, which is about 35% of Finland's total surface area. Its functions are separated into business activities and public administration duties.

Two certification systems (see PEFC 2020; FSC 2020) supplement the public forest policies and about 90 % of commercial forests have presently been certified according to PEFC and 10 % according to FSC (Ministry... 2020i). The certificates are independent of any public authorities and are used on a voluntary basis to ensure the sustainability and especially the biological diversity of forest management.

To summarize, the forest and nature conservation sectors consist of numerous potential objects of legitimacy evaluations even when the analysis is limited only to public institutions, decision-making processes, and administrative procedures. In practice, the organizations of public administration as institutional actors are also subject to legitimacy evaluations, and the same applies to purely private actors when they are perceived to have a significant, semi-formal position in forest policy-making (the organizations are not analyzed further in this study, but the value positions of key forest policy actors are analyzed in Article III and evaluations from print media data concerning public organizations as institutions that represent government are reported shortly in section 5).

1.3 Policy processes, actors, and public discussion

The forest industry has been an exceptionally dominating force in Finnish policy-making at least since the early 20th century because of its huge importance to the national economy (Siltala 2018). The importance of land owners started to increase after World War II through their improved organization and also through owners founding their own industrial wood processing companies. Since the 1950s, forest policy decisions gradually were started to be carried out through committees and working groups, attended by both the forest industry and land owners along with forest researchers (Eriksson 1993, 1995; Wilson et al. 1998; Ollonqvist 1998, 2002). This decision-making model in which the functional interest groups have had a central role has been depicted as corporatist (Palo 1993; Ollonqvist 1998, 2002). The public administration has had a varying status ranging from a coordinating role to that of forest policy designer.

Interest groups involved in decision-making have increased in number and gained greater representation during the last half-century. Environmental NGOs have been included in official committees and working groups since the early 1990s. Gradually, participation in such decision-making processes has been broadened to multi-stakeholder processes. The environmental movement grew quickly in Finland during the 1980s and 90s. Most of the movement's demands have been state-oriented, demanding preservation of

state-owned forests or private forests through state purchases as well as changes in the practices of silviculture in public lands (Siisiäinen 1998).

The shift toward multi-stakeholder processes and multi-level governance in the preparation of policies started in Finland at the turn of the millennium. In recent decades, the concept of "good governance" has increasingly influenced forest policy at the pan-European level, drawing attention to stakeholder involvement, coordination of sectoral policies, and multi-level governance (Kleinschmit & Edwards 2013). Several forms of public participation were applied in the preparation of the National Forest Programme 2010 (Figure 1). The organized interest groups were still the central positions in the working groups, but public events open to all interested citizens were also organized. In the end, the program was accepted by the Government of Finland.

Following the international trend, representatives from 25 different organizations from administrative sectors and research units as well as 23 non-state organizations participated in the preparation of the National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999) and domestic nature conservation programs in the research period, most often in the role of voting members of committees but some also as non-voting experts. The most important participatory non-state organizations have been the associations of land owners, the forest industry, entrepreneurs, and nature conservation organizations, which have also chaired some of the working groups. However, representatives of recreational users and the indigenous Sámi people have also been involved (Ministry... 1999; Ympäristöministeriö 2002).

In my analysis of the distribution of written comments to the National Forest Programme 2010, forestry sector actors, representatives of nature conservation organizations, and researchers were found to be the largest groups participating; each of these represented 15-18% of all comments, while the rest of the comments were quite fragmentarily distributed between many kinds of groups. In general, forest-related policy making in Finland have involved more organized interest groups and NGOs than political parties (Hellström 2001).

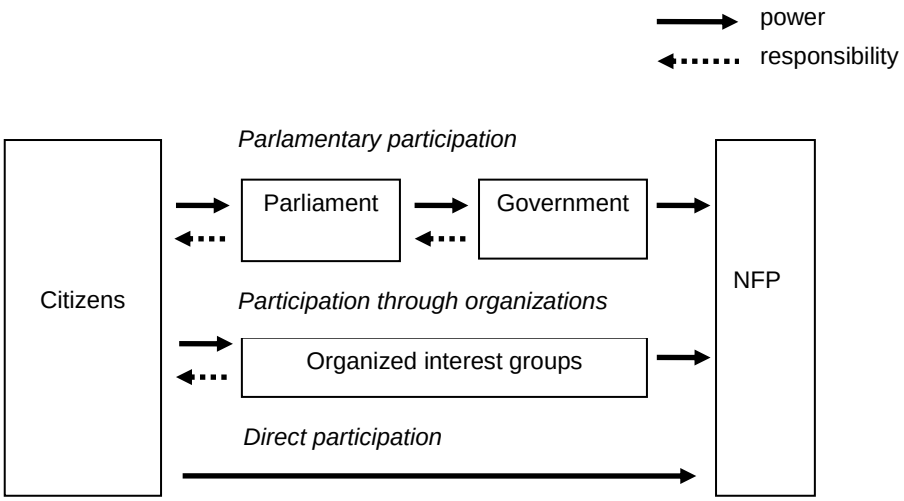

Figure 1. Forms of public participation in the preparation of the National Forest Programme 2010 (NFP) (Ministry... 1999).

The later national forest programs and strategies in Finland have applied similar multi-stakeholder approaches, defined as obligatory in the current Forest Act (1093/1996)), and even more systematic application of public discussion have been tested in the platform provided by the Ministry of Justice (Otakantaa.fi 2020). Examples of multi-stakeholder participation in the pan-European level include forest-related dialogues at ministerial conferences where forest owners, forest industry, social and environmental NGOs and the scientific community have been involved (Kleinschmit & Edwards 2013; Pülzl et al. 2013; Kleinschmit et al. 2018).

In summary, almost all forest-related organizations have been involved in the decision-making processes except the most radical environmental organizations, namely Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Greenpeace has later participated in decision-making concerning nature conservation of state-owned forests in Northern Finland as a negotiating party).

In practice, relatively few people have the possibility of participating in the policy processes and therefore public discussion is also an important form of participation. Forest-related discussions take place in newspapers, TV, radio, political meetings, and on the Internet; of these, the empirical analysis of public discussion in this study focuses on letters to editors in the newspapers. The discussion often pays attention to problems — such as the perceived environmental and social problems — and proposes changes to policies and institutions, such as laws, incentives, market regulation, or governmental organizations.

Large-scale public debate about the state of forests and nature protection was started in Finland in late 1960s, when the first wave of environmental movement started to grow (Reunala & Heikinheimo 1987; Hellström & Reunala 1995). In the 1980s, logging carried out in the wilderness of Northern Finland stimulated more intensive conflicts between conservationists and officials responsible for state forests. At the same time, forest practices both in public and private lands have been gradually but relatively quickly changed according to public demands. The environmental and forest discussions have come in waves of varying activity (Väliverronen 1997).

The focus of forest policy and nature conservation discussions has varied from the financial and ecological effects of state logging and private forestry grants to operational management guidelines, such as summertime logging, the number of trees left standing on logging sites, the width of buffer zones, and the scenic and landscape-related effects of clearcutting (Rantala & Primmer 2003). The size of the protected forest area and the means and resources for protection have also been important subjects in policy discourse. In order to reduce conflicts between actors and to take local opinions into account, Metsähallitus has applied participatory planning processes as a part of forest management in state forests (Wallenius 2000).

In conclusion, a large number of effectively organized functional interest groups and NGOs have participated in forest policy-making. Even more of them as well as other independent free thinkers can be expected to participate in the forest policy discussion; these assumptions are further analyzed in sections 5 and 6.

1.4 Empirical studies concerning legitimacy

1.4.1 General trust in public institutions in Finland and in international comparison

Legitimacy is an abstract concept and a difficult phenomenon to measure accurately, and it is therefore often measured indirectly in quantitative studies by asking about political trust or confidence (Blatter 2018; note that there are available several alternative definitions on the concept of trust, see Harre 1999 and Warren 1999a, 1999b). Political trust refers most often to how citizens perceive the performance of political institutions, actors, and parties in relation to their expectations (Hetherington 1998). According to an analysis by Warren (1999b: 348–349), trust in public institutions and in institutional actors are also likely to be very closely correlated. Political trust is often considered a precondition of a functioning democracy. A high level of trust improves the performance of public institutions and organizations, improves the functionality of free markets, and reduces the need for supervision and control in society (Listhaug & Ringdal 2008). In the long term, a lack of political trust may reduce the stability of democratic systems and their legitimacy (Easton 1965), slow down the implementation of necessary societal reforms (Hooghe & Zmerli 2011), or even increase illegal activities and radicalization of some people.

Bäck et al. (2016: 386-397) maintain that on an individual level the most important explanatory factors of trust in public institutions are subjective civic competence, trust in other people, interest in politics, and evaluations on the competence of members of Parliament and the state of the nation's economy. Subjective civic competence is the strongest explanatory factor regarding trust, and a lack of interest in politics is strongly correlated with a lack of trust in political institutions. The level of education is positively correlated with perceived political competence and trust. Trust in other people also improves trust in institutions. Attachment to Finnish political parties influences trust very little. A further factor that affects trust is age: the elderly are more trusting than the young generations, and this change is linear. Gender or education have no significant effect on trust.

International comparisons are important in putting the metrics of trust into perspective and data from the European Social Survey makes it possible to compare the development of trust in central institutions in Finland in the period of 2002-2014, and to compare Finland to other European countries (Bäck et al. 2016: 390-393, cf. Domanski 2005: 72-73; Grönlund & Setälä 2007: 403-406). In Finland, variation in trust was low during the research period despite a minor temporary downfall due to measures instated in 2010, during the financial crisis. In European comparison, trust in Finland is in between the fourth- and sixth-highest level among 32 countries; the other top countries include Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden. According to Blatter (2018), only small minorities are not at all satisfied with the way democracy functions in Western countries; and even fewer people declare themselves supporters of radical change, while vast majorities still support their democratic systems. The successes of the Nordic countries have been explained by their minimal systemic corruption and by the ideal of the welfare society, which supports the principle of general justice and fairness in society and improves trust between citizens — which is also reflected in other societal actors (Bäck et al. 2016: 394).

Despite high level of trust, governmental actors in Finland have shown quite a lot of interest in developing the possibilities of political participation through, for instance, public deliberations as a part of political decision-making processes, through possibilities for civic

initiations, and through creating suitable conditions for local participation. Actually, Metsähallitus has been a forerunner in applying participatory planning in Finland by transferring the best practices of forest sector from the USA (Wallenius 2001).

The explanatory factors are used here in depicting the context but they cannot be analyzed further in the major part of this study due to limitations of media data. However, the concept of trust has been applied in the analysis of interview data in Article III and in the results section 5.2.

1.4.2 Legitimacy and democracy studies related to forests and environment

Literature searches produced huge amounts of links; for example, a simple Google Scholar search for *legitimacy and forest* found over 300,000 links. However, some of the broad variety of forest- and nature-related legitimacy research had to be omitted from further analysis. A number of studies use the terms legitimacy and democracy only as phrases without reference to relevant theoretical literature; these are not included here. Also a number of studies concerning developing countries and indigenous peoples were omitted here because their contexts are so different to my own standpoint (a liberal democratic constitutional industrialized welfare state that is relatively small and homogenous by language, religion and ethnic origin) that scant possibilities for comparison emerged. Of cross-cultural studies, see e.g. Colfer (2011) who reviews legitimacy studies in a broad, global context and demonstrates the huge amount of different perceptions concerning the legitimacy of forest government that exists on a grassroots level in different cultures.

Forest policy research has traditionally focused greatly on forest management economics (e.g. Valsta & Kuuluvainen 2009), while political scientific applications have been of less interest, and policy science is a relative newcomer to academic inquiry (Arts & van de Graaf 2009; Arts 2012; de Jong et al. 2012). After a discursive turn in environmental policy research (Hajer 1995; Feindt & Oels 2005; Parkins & Mitchell 2005), studies focusing on public discussion have been of interest to many professionals in forest research (Arts et al. 2006, 2010, 2016; Arts & Buizer 2009; Giessen et al. 2009; Kleinschmit et al. 2009; Steffek 2009; Arts & Visseren-Hamakers 2012; de Jong et al. 2012; Kleinschmit 2012; Arts 2014; Takala et al. 2017a, 2017b, 2019). Arts et al. (2013: 39) maintain that "A discourse is a commonly accepted set of ideas, concepts and understandings that give meaning to a particular part of reality [...] Examples from international forest policy are discourses on tropical deforestation, sustainable forest management [...], forest biodiversity, illegal logging, and the role of forests in climate change mitigation [...] These global discourses co-shape forest discussions at lower scales, including the European level".

Environmental policy literature partly overlaps with forest policy studies, and has provided very interesting contributions, especially related to conceptualizations of legitimacy (Eckerberg 1986; Bäckstrand et. al 1996; Lundqvist 2004, Bäckstrand 2003, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006; Steffek 2009, Kronsell & Bäckstrand 2010, Johansson 2012, 2013; Buijs & Lawrence 2013; Buijs et al. 2014; Pickering et al. 2020).

There are very few empirical academic studies that focus directly on the legitimacy of forest and nature conservation policies in Finland that apply explicitly some theory of legitimacy or other relevant literature on the subject. Rantala (2007, 2008a, 2008b) and Valkeapää et al. (2009) were some of the first studies, summarized also in Helkama et al. (2010). These have been followed by Rantala (2011, 2012; summarized in section 5) and

Valkeapää & Vehkalahti (2012), Valkeapää & Karppinen (2013), and Valkeapää (2014). The main result of the studies by Valkeapää is that, overall, legitimacy was evaluated positively and forest owners considered forest policy in general to be more acceptable than other citizens did. Clearcutting was the most criticized practice. The self-evaluated forest policy competence led to a more negative assessment of the legitimacy of forest policy. Prior to these legitimacy studies, the values of Finnish forest policy were studied also by using other conceptualizations (Rantala 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2005, 2006, 2008c; Rantala et al. 2006; Saastamoinen et al. 2006).

Studies on forest owners have a have been intensive in Finland, including studies on the values and objectives of forest owners (Kuuluvainen et al. 1996; Karppinen 1998, 2000, 2005; Karppinen & Hänninen 2000, Takala et al. 2017a, 2017b; Karppinen et al. 2020) and on their perceptions of legitimacy (Vainio 2011).

In addition to citizens, forest sector-related empirical studies have focused on the values of organized actors (Tuler & Webler 1999; Satterfield 2001; Webler et al. 2001; Rantala & Primmer 2003; Rantala 2004c; Mascarenhas & Scarce 2004; Driscoll 2006; Saarikoski et al. 2010; Buijs & Lawrence 2013; Lieberherr & Thomann 2020). Among the organized actors, the representatives of forest industry, administration, and nature conservation organizations are studied most often while less studies concerning forest owners, recreation users, and researchers as well as other forest experts can be found.

One form of legitimacy studies is much more common in the forest sector than any other studies: these are studies on forest certificates (Cashore 2002; Bartley 2003; Rehbinder 2003; Bernstein & Cashore 2004, 2007; Cashore et al. 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Meidinger 2003, 2011; Gulbrandsen 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008, 2010; Nussbaum & Simula 2005; Auld et al. 2008; Hysing 2009a, 2009b; Overdevest 2009; Keskitalo et al. 2009; Schlyter et al. 2009; Auld & Gulbrandsen 2010, Marx & Cuypers 2010; Schepers 2010; Johansson 2012, 2013; Marx et el. 2012; McDermott 2012; Romero et al. 2013; de la Plaza Esteban et al. 2014; Basso et al. 2020). Certificates have been a popular subject of legitimacy studies, in spite of the fact that certificates are not part of public forest policies but private policy instruments controlled by civil society organizations and corporations, especially by the forest industry, environmental NGOs and forest owners' associations. The certification studies often use a theory basis that is rather different from political studies, namely a research tradition that comes from the sociology of organizations (Suchman 1995) and studies of accounting. Most certification studies are evaluative by nature; however, recently Neuner (2020) has surveyed the public opinion on certification organizations. Schlyter et al. (2009) has focused also on environmental effectiveness in biological terms and on acceptance by forest owners.

Forest-related participatory processes have been studied in Finland both empirically and theoretically (Tikkanen 2003, 2006, 2018; Leskinen 2004; Leskinen et al. 2004; Primmer and Kyllönen 2006; Kangas et al. 2010; Saarikoski et al. 2010, 2012; Löfström et al. 2014). The latest summarizing study (Tikkanen 2018) was somewhat skeptical on the potentials of participatory forest policy processes in the form in which they have recently been implemented in Finland.

The book by Keulartz & Leistra (2008) is one of the most important compilations to systematically apply new legitimacy theory from political science to empirical subjects, mostly to nature conservation policies in the EU, and especially to the Natura 2000 program.

The study by Pomeranz & Stedman (2020) is a good example of research on environmental policies that is actually very close to legitimacy studies, but has been

conducted under other conceptions; in their case the umbrella concept is good governance, with legitimacy as a secondary concept. Baker (2006/2015) has analyzed good governance and many other liberal democratic values under the title of sustainable development in the context of international policy-making.

Among studies of environmental and forest law, Ebbesson (1997), Bodanski (1999), Appelstrand (2002), Rehbinder (2003), Pappila (2012), and Borgström (2018) have been interested in legitimacy-related issues. Business studies have also been interested in legitimacy in the forest industry (Driscoll 2006; Joutsenvirta 2006; Vaara et al. 2006; Vaara & Tienari 2008; Joutsenvirta & Vaara 2009; Wang 2011; Toppinen et al. 2012; Toppinen & Kurki 2013; Wang & Juslin 2013). The studies on companies used both qualitative and quantitative methodology, and have been based mostly on theories of corporate social responsibility and accounting; however, the business research is not further analyzed in this study.

The major theme of this study, namely the public discussion on the legitimacy of forest-related policies in the media, has not been studied much. Political and social scientists have also emphasized the importance of the public legitimation of policies, as Steffek (2009: 313) writes: "[...] discourse analysis, generally speaking, has come to occupy a very prominent place in environmental sociology and policy analysis. There is, however, one specific aspect of discourse that deserves special scrutiny and that has been studied to a lesser degree: the legitimation of the institutions of environmental governance, their goals, policies, and procedures, through discursive processes. While the legitimation of governance generally is an important issue for political science, it is of particular interest in the field of environmental politics." The special interest of this study is to analyze the basis of social values used in legitimacy evaluations.

Some qualitative studies have analyzed news materials in newspapers (Väliverronen 1995, 1996, 1997; Stoddart 2005; Takala et al. 2019; Sténs & Mårald 2020) and some have focused on quantitative content analysis of news media (Bengston 1994; Xu & Bengston 1997; Bengston et al. 1999). Johansson (2012, 2013) has also applied media data in studies on discussion of forest certificates' legitimacy. Driscoll (2006) has studied perceptions of legitimacy related to the forest sector and uses a variety of sources, including interviews of actors and news media, while Hessing (2003) is one of the few if not the only one to use letters to editors as sources in the analysis of legitimacy discussion concerning the forest sector.

The participants in the discussion on forest policy have not been studied very well, either. Claims have been made that some groups such as forestry or environmental actors would excessively dominate the public discussion (e.g., Valkeapää 2014 claims that public discussion have been dominated by forest professionals and actors that represent economic interests) but in practice it is not known which groups participate and which are less active in the public. In the literature of political science, some people or groups of people have been proposed to be especially important influencers in the development of opinions concerning legitimacy in public discussion (cf. Sténs & Mårald 2020: 4-5). Steffek (2009) names five categories of speakers involved in debates over environmental governance. These include: 1) State representatives: politicians, civil servants, and diplomats; 2) Experts from the field of (environmental) governance; 3) Activists representing NGOs and industry lobbyists; 4) Journalists; and 5) Citizens. Berg (1988) proposes that major influencers are "symbol professionals" who have skills in the sophisticated use of language. They include: 1) Authors, artists, dramatic actors, and others who are engaged in cultural activities, including reviewers, scholars, and teachers in the Humanities; 2) Scientific experts, such as

economists, lawyers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and engineers; 3) Consultants in public relations and advertising; 4) Socio-political actors involved directly in decision-making, such as politicians, expert advisers, organization leaders, businessmen, and prominent newspaper writers. According to Rezsohazy (2001), the influencers include "great moral personalities, prophets, philosophers, ideologists, intellectuals, scientists, artists, novelists, film directors, and institutions such as churches, clubs, learned societies, research centers, and universities". Harrinkari et al. (2016,2017) identified three advocacy coalitions in the revision of Finnish Forest Act in 2010–2013, namely forestry, administrative, and environmental coalitions (see also Hänninen & Ollonqvist 2002 and Tikkanen et al. 2003).

1.5 Goals of study and research questions

An overall goal of this dissertation and its sub-studies is to develop a general conceptual framework of legitimacy in order to better understand different dimensions of legitimacy and their relations. The framework is intended to be especially useful in the empirical analyses of public political discussion. However, the idea is that the application of such a conceptual framework need not be limited to analyses of forest policies, but with case-specific modifications it can be used in principle by almost any discipline in legitimacy studies. The most important idea in both the empirical and theoretical parts of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding regarding dimensions of legitimacy and their relations.

The conceptual framework is not based on any single theory, but rather uses theories from several disciplines and analyzes their possibilities of being applied in the empirical studies of legitimacy in the forest sector (Figure 2); the academic sources range from different schools of empirical legitimacy studies to political philosophy, while the actualizations range from political institutions to political ideologies that political actors and citizens varyingly support. The theoretical portion also briefly analyzes other political concepts related to legitimacy, such as good governance and sustainable development, which operate on similar values.

The conceptual analysis also builds a link between theories and observations through methodology for the analysis of textual data. The methodology explains the translation of real life observations into theoretical concepts and demonstrates this with empirical illustrations. The methodology developed in the conceptual analysis will be further applied in empirical studies in the articles and in the summary of results (section 5), which presents also previously unpublished empirical results.

The objective of the empirical parts of this study is to explore conceptions of legitimacy that are applied in public discussion concerning the forest regime. The empirical analysis focuses on recognizing the principles of legitimacy and their frequencies, as well as the different objects associated with these principles. The study aims to identify and document the vocabulary of legitimacy as it occurs in the forest-related public discussion in major newspapers. The major topics in the public discussion are also reported in order to facilitate the comparisons to previous studies at home and abroad; however, forest-related practices, such as silviculture, are not analyzed in detail in my study. The expectation is that the central forest-related interests and activities described in section 1.1 are also the most typical topics in the public discussion.

The study also investigates the participants in the public discussion on forest policy issues in print media and compares the observations to empirical and literature-derived assumptions made in sections 1.1-1.4. The expectations concerning public participation are that at least the representatives of central organized interest groups and public officials would participate in public discussion (as they have participated in the preparation of forest-related programs in the working groups and by written comments, as analyzed above).

Furthermore, the value positions of the central organized actors are also analyzed using interviews and written sources. The key idea is to find ideological similarities and differences between the organized actors. The study also discusses whether some of the concepts could be classified as essentially contested concepts of which it may be especially difficult to agree.

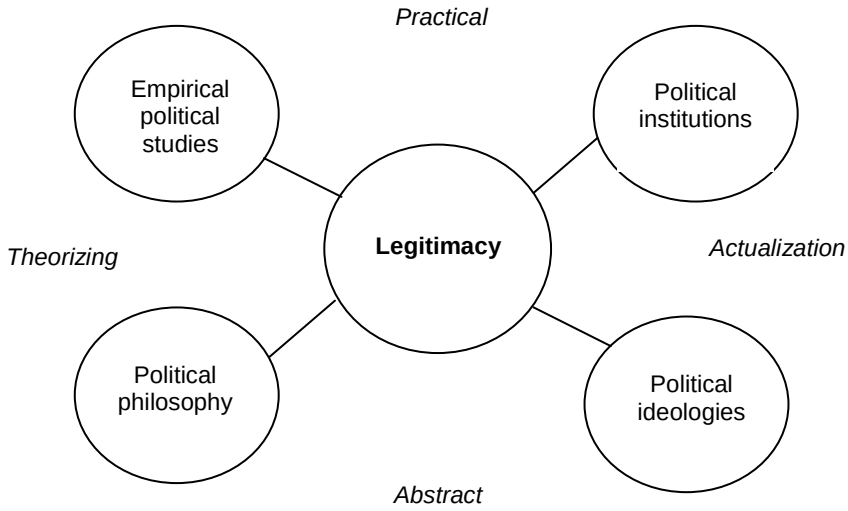

Figure 2. The starting point for developing the conceptual framework.

The major goal of literature analysis of empirical studies regarding legitimacy on forest-related policies is to find the studies that would serve as points of comparison to the findings of this study. Furthermore, some general findings on general legitimacy in Finland and international comparisons have been presented in order to provide more understanding on the context wherein this study takes place. The general research questions which I answer in the different parts of this thesis are presented below.

The conceptual research questions are (sections 2 and 4, Article I):

What are the most relevant and valid theoretical concepts for empirical studies of legitimacy? What alternative conceptualizations would be possible concerning the same political and social phenomena? What are the different structures of legitimacy evaluations? How should objects of support, patterns of legitimacy, and performance evaluations be classified into coherent conceptual frameworks? How could the theories and observations be methodologically connected?

The research questions related to public discussion and organized actors are (sections 5 and 6, Article III):

Who participates in the forest-related public discussion in Finland? Which organized interest groups participate in the discussion, which groups do not participate? Are there differences between the participants in the preparation of the national forest program and public discussion? Are governmental officials involved in public discussion? Do some groups or single persons dominate the discussion? What are the major topics of discussion? What are the most important values of the central organized actors and their organizations concerning Finnish forest policy? What are the major similarities and differences between these organized actors?

The research questions related to legitimacy evaluations of forest-related institutions are (sections 5 and 6, Articles II and III):

What principles of legitimacy do citizens and organized actors use in their evaluations of decision-making in the current forest regime? Which are the most and least common principles? What are the performance evaluations of institutions and decision-making processes? Are there some principles specific only to forest-related decision-making or to Finland? Are the principles applied in a similar manner in public discussion as they are applied in theorization on legitimacy?

2 THEORIES AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Definitions and disciplines

The term *legitimacy* was borrowed from Medieval Latin in the 16th century. Some of the oldest uses of legitimacy refer to monarchies, where the king or queen possesses the divine or traditional right to rule the kingdom, often based on the strict principle of hereditary right and membership of nobility. Expressions referring broadly to legitimacy in contemporary English include some very general positive terms, such as *authority*, *justice*, *validity*, *right*, *constitutionality*, *rightfulness*, and *correctness*. Utterances related to legislation include *lawfulness* and *legality*, for instance. *Legit* is a common slang expression with reference to authenticity and genuineness, sometimes also used ironically (see more details on the historical and contemporary mundane usage of the term legitimacy in Dictionary.com 2020; Merriam-Webster... 2020; Urban... 2020; Wiktionary 2020).

Many academic studies have employed the term legitimacy but few define it adequately (Suchman 1995: 572). Bekkers & Edwards (2007) have noted that "a closer look at the concept [of legitimacy] reveals Babel-like confusion of definitions, perspectives, and interpretations". When legitimacy has different shades of meaning and if it is undertheorized, it is very easy to make claims about legitimacy that are ambiguous or theoretically unsound, so one needs to be extra careful before deploying the idea of legitimacy (Solum 2020b). The definition of legitimacy has itself been the subject of extensive debate and discussion. No single and universally acceptable definition of legitimacy exists (Ansell 2001). Thus, legitimacy has been depicted as an essentially contested concept: it is difficult to reach a final consensus on the definition and meaning of legitimacy among scholars, practitioners, and laypeople alike (Hurrelmann et al. 2007a; Connolly 1992; see also Gallie 1956; Solum 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). For these reasons, it is possible and useful to provide a discussion of its various meanings and the consequences of adopting one of them.

On the most general level, the idea of legitimacy refers to the rightfulness and acceptability of political authority (Hurrelmann et al. 2007b). The concept of legitimacy is closely intertwined with a network of other normative and empirical concepts in philosophy and political science —power, authority, rights, obligations, sovereignty, consent, institutions, and the state. Legitimacy is a critical concept in politics and political science because it goes to the very heart of any normative claim made by a government, a state, or a power that it should be willingly obeyed or respected (Ansell 2001).

Most major studies on legitimacy declare that legitimacy is based on social values that are more or less accepted by the population. Both philosophers and empirical political scientists, as well as sociologists and social psychologists, agree that the most fundamental divergence over the meaning of legitimacy is between a normative and an empirical approach to the concept (Ansell 2001; Zelditch 2001; Berg 2008; Hurrelmann et al. 2007b; Fabienne 2017; Blatter 2018; Vallier 2018). The normative approach is sometimes called prescriptive, and in some contexts it is referred to as theoretical or political theorization (which may be a potential source of misunderstanding, as political theorization is practiced in the empirical side as well). Commonly used expressions associated with the term empirical include descriptive, positive, and sociological. Another distinction between philosophy and empirical studies is the division into aprioristic and aposterioristic studies;

the former refers to *a priori* (before observations) acceptability in the light of criteria provided by theories of political philosophy and the latter refers most often to the factual *a posteriori* (observation-based) acceptance of nation-state institutions among the population.

The normative approach is used after all by political philosophers to identify the standards by which a regime or action must be judged if it is to be regarded as legitimate (the term standard can here be understood as a synonym for social value or principle). Political philosophers are interested in the question: Why should the government be obeyed? And thus they might want to identify those conditions under which an authority is legitimate — the reasons why citizens ought to obey. Political legitimacy means the virtue of political institutions and of the decisions — about laws, policies, and candidates for political office — made within them (Ansell 2001; Fabienne 2017; Blatter 2018).

Barker (1990) and Beetham (1991) maintain that the normative and empirical approaches to legitimacy simply have different purposes and should not be regarded as antithetical. To simplify, in philosophy the researcher aims to define universal yardsticks by which the legitimacy of power and authority can be evaluated and justified theoretically, while empirical researchers attempt to find the prevalent value basis that the people (often citizens or citizen groups) use in their evaluations of legitimacy in each society and in each historical moment. In practice the disciplines of political philosophy and political science overlap but the difference is that philosophers almost never use real world data or cite empirical studies.

In empirically-oriented political science, legitimacy usually refers to the acceptance of an authority, legislation, or regime. Political legitimacy is considered a basic condition for governing, without which a government will suffer legislative deadlock(s) and collapse (Blatter 2018). Political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has famously said that legitimacy also "involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society." Political scientists David Easton (1965) and Robert Dahl (1971) have depicted legitimacy as a reservoir of "diffuse support" that helps people to accept or tolerate institutional outputs — even if the result is something they oppose or even damages their aspirations — if there is enough good will available; otherwise the political legitimacy is endangered. Psychologist Tom Tyler (2006) has described legitimacy as "the belief that the authorities, institutions, and social arrangements are appropriate, proper, and just." Sociologist Morris Zelditch (2001) says that "something is legitimate if it is in accord with the norms, values, beliefs, practices, and procedures accepted by a group." Sociologist of organizations Mark Suchman had defined legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, and appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions." The definition of legitimacy seems to be dependent on the definition of an institution adopted in a given context. In general, sociologists and psychologists appear to use broader definitions for legitimacy, which also include some informal social institutions, while political scientists are more focused on the regime and its central political institutions.

Legitimacy is not only a static process. Focusing on the process calls attention to the two-sided nature of legitimacy. On one hand, legitimacy is about beliefs in the moral rightness or goodness of a regime or institution. On the other hand, those in power make claims about moral rightness or goodness of regimes and institutions. Weber (1914/1968) and Barker (1990: 59) has emphasized this two-sidedness, the latter arguing that legitimacy "[…] is both a belief held by subjects, or by some subjects, and a claim made by rulers".

Beetham (1991) also proposes simultaneous studies on the perceptions of laymen and those in power.

Most theorization of legitimacy takes place in a more or less implicitly or explicitly liberal-democratic context, typical to Western societies, or in other terms to modern society. Shortly, a modern state refers to a liberal-democratic constitutional competitive party system; a secular state; the values of enlightenment and rationality; and political, social, and cultural liberalism, or some combination of these issues. The standard assumption in liberal philosophy includes at least the principles of liberty and equality, as well as varying views regarding support of free markets, free trade, limited government, and individual rights, including civil and human rights and freedoms. However, some forms of philosophy base their understanding of legitimacy on partly or completely different principles (Parekh 1996: 515-516) and in practice, citizens can also perceive non-democratic regimes as legitimate, for instance, because such systems are able to produce and share material welfare, engender nationalism, or are ruled by a charismatic leader.

The study of legitimacy has often been described as a multidisciplinary venture (e.g., Zelditch 2001). In addition to the disciplines mentioned above, several other concepts related to social values relevant for the time have emerged, especially during the last four decades. Practical policy-making and academic research have developed a number of concepts and respective disciplines that overlap significantly with the concept of legitimacy by including more or less similar sets of values. For example, Godard (2007) asks whether sustainable development has become an alternative principle of justification and Baker (2006/2015) analyses a broad range of social values that are gathered under the concept of sustainable development. Concepts of democracy and liberal democracy are also used in similar broad terms. In addition to those mentioned, parallel and partly overlapping umbrella concepts include at least good governance, environmental ethics, environmental justice, social justice, and environmental economics. Furthermore, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency are also used in overlapping meanings in evaluation studies and accounting (cf. alternative conceptualizations of merit criteria and performance standards in the policy evaluation textbooks by Bemelmans-Videc & Vedung 1998 and Vedung 2008).

Figure 3 demonstrates how the concepts of sustainable development emerged during the mid 1980s, and how the concepts of environmental ethics, environmental justice, and good governance increased their popularity during the 1990s, while the concept of social justice has a longer history (much more popular concepts of democracy and legitimacy cannot be presented in the same scale).

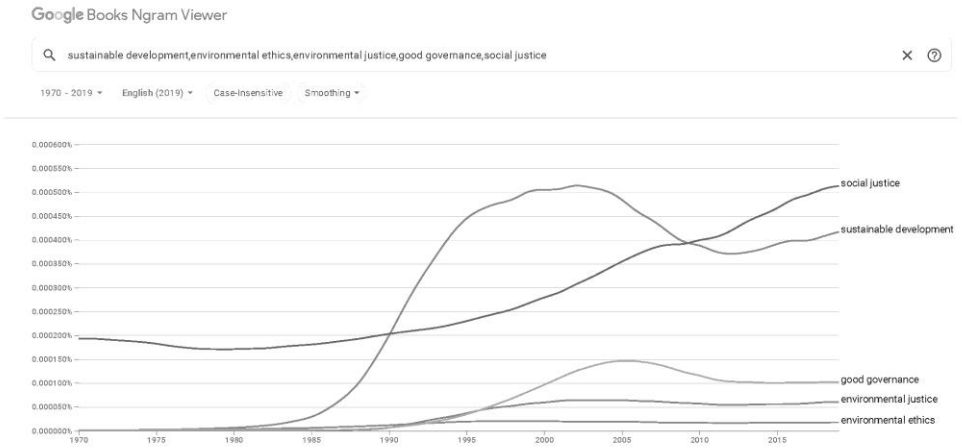

Figure 3. The emergence of concepts sustainable development, environmental ethics, environmental justice, good governance, and social justice in 1970-2019 based on Google NGram search (note that the figures are relative to the data sets available).

Table 1 lists some of the umbrella concepts concerning contemporary social values, their central principles and procedural or substantial nature, as well as some examples related to their origin and actualization in legislation, political processes, and agreements as well as in other arrangements in society. According to Birkland (2006: 149-150), procedural policy-making refers to following the rules of process (how policy is made) and substantive policy-making refers to provision of goods and services (what is pursued) and in the case of forest policies, also protection of nature.

Sustainable development has become a popular conceptualization of actual social values and an elementary part of international soft (non-binding) law in a relatively short time after the report of Brundtland Commission (United... 1987) and Rio conference (United... 1992); still, it is good to note that the idea of sustainable use of nature is not new to the forest sector and it has in fact been applied in forestry from at least the 18th century. In this situation, however, an increasing numbers of softer institutions underline the importance of follow-ups concerning public forest-related discussions in which individual actors produce texts that affect institutions which actualize the international law into national forest policies (cf. Phillips et al. 2004).

Environmental legitimacy is another nature-related concept that has been used in the literature of corporate social and environmental responsibility, especially concerning public communication and the public evaluation of corporate environmental performance (Aerts & Cormier 2009; Bortree 2009; Alrazi et al. 2015). This study proposes that the concept of environmental legitimacy could also be used in studies concerning public discussion on public policies and institutions in order to gather the nature conservation-related public evaluations, such as values of nature and environmental sustainability, under the same title.

Table 1. Alternative umbrella concepts of contemporary social values.

Umbrella concept	Examples of key principles	Procedural /substantive	Academic examples	Examples of political actualizations
Liberal democratic modern state	Freedom, constitutional state, democracy, equality, distributive justice	Procedural	Locke (1690), Popper (1950)	Liberal-democratic constitutions (from late 1700s), Declaration of Human Rights (1948), basic rights in the EU
Democracy	Political rights, public participation, equality, transparency accountability, responsiveness	Procedural	Tocqueville (1839/2000), Dahl (1971)	Liberal-democratic constitutions and referendums (from late 1700s), participatory planning (from 1960's)
Sustainable use of forests, sustainable development	Ecological, economic, social, and cultural sustainability, distributive justice (needs, equity)	Substantive	German foresters (1700-1800s) , Baker (2006/2015)	Forest legislation (in Finland from from 1886), Brundtland commission (1987), Rio's process (1992), Agenda 2000, Natura 2000
Effectiveness	Output (ha, %), (intended and unintended) outcomes	Substantive	E.g., forest sciences, planning sciences	Forest legislation, best practice guidelines for sustainable forest management
Efficiency	Cost/benefit ratio	Substantive	Economics	Environmental impact assessment (from 1960s)
Accountability	Political, legal, administrative, and professional responsibility	Procedural /substantive	Accounting science	Elections, accounting by governmental agencies, evaluations, ombudsmen, independent auditing
Environmental ethics	Environmental sustainability, environmental values, intrinsic values of nature	Substantive	Pinchot (1910), Leopold (1949), Næss (1973)	Environmental legislation
Good governance	Participation, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, rule of law	Procedural /substantive	Weber (1914/1968)	Administrative legislation
Political legitimacy	Democracy, freedom, equality, justice, welfare	Procedural /substantive	Locke (1690), Weber (1914/1968)	"Der Rechtstaat", liberal-democratic constitutions and other legislation
Social justice	Distributive justice	Substantive	Rawls (1971)	Welfare state
Environmental justice	Distributive justice, sustainable development, public participation	Substantive (procedural)	Dobson (1998), Dobson & Eckersley (2006)	Constitution of Finland, Nature conservation legislation
(Environmental) economics	Welfare in terms of utility, (nature conservation)	Substantive	Faustmann (1849), Baumol & Oates (1975), Mitchell & Carson (1989)	Rules for free markets and for solving problems of public goods

To summarize, political legitimacy can be understood as an umbrella concept (cf. Weatherford 1992) and in this study it is understood to cover relevant social values, whether they were found in theories or in empirical analysis. The reason why this study uses legitimacy as a major concept (instead of sustainable development or good governance, for instance) is that there is a broad and well-founded set of scientific and philosophical literature available on legitimacy and democratic legitimacy, while most other concepts mentioned are relatively new and have yet to be fully formed. The core meaning of legitimacy also appears not to be contested as much as many other political concepts; for example, Jacobs (1999) and Baker (2006/2015) maintain that sustainable development is an essentially contested concept, per se.

While most of the studies on political legitimacy focus on the national or international institutions of regimes and the political community (e.g. Schneider et al. 2007), this study focuses on the forest sector. Political legitimacy means here that the forest and nature conservation regimes are perceived as rightful, and that the related political institutions (such as regulations and public incentives, as well as decision-making processes, forest programs, and administrative procedures) are perceived as rightful among the people.

In this study, the concept of political legitimacy consists of several sub-concepts. The central sub-concepts applied in the empirical analysis herein are welfare, environmental legitimacy, democratic legitimacy, distributive justice and fair markets, good governance, and core regime principles (domestic and international legality and basic rights). However, before presenting empirical results, some central disciplines are analyzed in the next sections, in order to provide a more comprehensive and many-sided view on the academic use of the concept of legitimacy.

2.2 Political philosophy and empirical studies of political ideologies

In political philosophy, also known as political theory, the normative concept of political legitimacy refers to some benchmark of acceptability or justification of political power or authority and — possibly — obligation (Vallier 2018). Philosophy is based on reasoning, meaning consciously making sense of things, applying logical thinking, studying philosophical literature, and seeking out new information; in the case of legitimacy on topics such as politics, justice, rights, property, and law, for example.

In one view legitimacy refers, in the first instance, to the justification of coercive political power; or viewed alternatively, legitimacy is linked to the justification of political authority that is also needed in the justification of a state (Vallier 2018). "When is political authority legitimate?" is one of the fundamental questions of political philosophy (Christiano 2020). Depending on how one understands political authority, this question may be the same as, "when is coercion by the state legitimate?", or "when do we have duties to obey the state?", or "when and who has the right to rule through the state?"

Democratic theorization is an important division of political thought. The democratic conception of authority refers to the question of whether a democratic assembly has legitimate political authority within certain limits, for instance, because it treats every citizen as equal in the process of lawmaking (Christiano 2020). The justification of the present legitimate order is often codified in the constitution; for example, the Constitution of Finland (731/1999), based on liberal-democratic ideals, declares that "The powers of the State in Finland are vested in the people, who are represented by the Parliament". The possibility of citizens to influence the government and have the regular opportunity to

affect the selection of those in office are generally considered some of the main sources of legitimacy, both in a philosophical sense and in practice.

Democratic theorization is closely related to the demand of public justification (Vallier 2018). Philosophers have a long time discussed on the importance of public discussion because they not only support learning from each other — such as, about facts what to think or how to act — but also learning about each other, for example, about interests of our fellow citizens. Public deliberation may also advance the changes in thinking. Furthermore, the publicity may have a "civilizing force" both from direction of representatives to citizens but also other way when publicity forces all participants of discussion to present their views more in the language of common good and reason (Elster 1998; Gosseries & Parr 2018).

Some political philosophers and theorists place a requirement of public justification on the permissible use of state coercion or political power (Vallier 2018; Christiano 2020). According to these theorists, the recognition of citizens as free and equal moral persons requires that coercion be justified for or to others in their own terms, or with reasons that they could recognize as valid. In this view, a public justification is achieved when members of the relevant public have adequate or sufficient reason to endorse a particular coercive proposal, law, or policy. However, there is considerable disagreement about how to understand the idea of public justification. For instance, some hold that all public justifications must occur via shared or accessible reasons (often called consensus theorists), whereas others (often called convergence theorists) hold that public justification can be obtained if different points of view each provide good grounds for a particular policy. Public justification theorists also "disagree about the right level of idealization or how to attribute reasons to citizens, which often involves imagining them as possessing superior information and cognitive abilities" (Vallier 2018).

Parekh (1996: 515-516) discusses contemporary, culturally plural societies and considers if any ground with moral force for political obligation can be found in a situation in which many sections of the populace (including a variety of fundamentalists) coexist. In such a case, obligation perceived as legitimate is dependent on differing cultural traditions and ideologies. His proposition for political theory is that: "A well-considered theory of political obligation, as of legitimacy and authority, will necessarily have to be thin and formal, leaving sufficient moral spaces to be filled in differently by different moral traditions". However, he notes that this may not solve the problems concerning the different understandings of very crucial (possibly essentially contested) concepts, such as equality or liberty. Moreover, from the point of view of empirical studies, a narrow theory does not help to reveal the pluralistic spectrum of real life evaluations on political institutions.

Furthermore, in philosophy there is not available a generally accepted prescriptive theory or universally well-founded justification of the state or its public policies so far (see, e.g., Vedung 1997: 248-249). While this argument itself may be disputable, it can be safely said that among philosophers there is no consensus over such theories and their most important normative arguments. Actually, most schools of political thinking have their own justifications, and thus their own vision of what constitutes a legitimate state. Variants of liberal democratic ideologies may have been the mainstream of political philosophy (see Barry 2000), but during the last century they have been challenged by Marxist and conservative ideologies, for instance, and more recently especially by environmental political thought.

In addition to fragmentation, abstractness, and narrowness, a major problem of aprioristic political philosophy — from the point of view of empirical research — is a potential problem of lacking validity. Theories are connected to societal reality at best

loosely and, of course, they have not primarily been composed for that purpose. In other words, there is no guarantee that any fit between theory and the observations concerning data from real life can be found. However, philosophy is necessary to the understanding of societal development especially in historical perspective and, for example, the idea of essentially contested concepts comes from philosophical discourse (Gallie 1956).

However, more empirically-applicable "middle range" approaches of political theories and descriptive versions of political ideologies are also available. Ideologies are concepts that in principle make it possible to link social values observed in data into somewhat coherent combinations and define the individual's relation to society. Heywood (1998: 12) defines the descriptive concept of ideology:

> "An ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organised political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify, or overthrow the existing system of power. All ideologies therefore (a) offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a 'world view', (b) provide the model of a desired future, a vision of the 'good society', and (c) outline how political change can and should be brought about."

The major modern ideologies include liberalism, socialism, and conservatism as well as cross-cutting ideologies, such as nationalism and industrialism, and they can be understood as one of the bases for the thinking and order in contemporary Western societies (Ball & Dagger 2002; Baradat 2000; Heywood 1998; Saastamoinen 1998). Among the new ideologies, environmental thought (Heywood 1998: 264-290; Dobson 1999; Gabrielson et al. 2016) is particularly interesting in relation to forest policy.

In this dissertation, the descriptive concept of ideology was tested in Article III. Article II also compares observations from public discussion in print media to "middle range" approaches of democratic theories (Dahl 1971.1989, 1998; Barker 1990, 2001, 2007; Beetham 1994; Saward 1994, 2003; Held 1995, 1996/1987; Beetham et al. 2002; Setälä 2003; Bekkers & Edwards 2007) and section 6 discusses similarities of the observations and theorizing on environmental justice (Dobson 1998, 1999; Dobson & Eckersley 2006).

2.3 Theoretical and empirical applications in political and social science

2.3.1 Alternatives for empirical analysis

Political scientists use the concept of legitimacy in assessments of the rightfulness of political rule. In political science, legitimacy can be studied from normative or empirical perspectives. The normative approach is close to political philosophy as described above, and researchers develop and justify their own evaluations of the rightfulness of political arrangements by using it. In the empirical approach, researchers study how other people, such as citizens, organized actors, or political elites evaluate the rightfulness of political rule.

Empirical political scientists are interested in measuring the degree of popular acceptance of existing regimes and developing explanations for low or high degrees of legitimacy (Easton 1965; Berg 1988; Wiberg 1988; Beetham 1991; Sadeniemi 1995, Scharpf 1997, 1999; Norris 1999; Pardo 2000; Barnard 2001; Hurrelmann et al. 2007; Schneider et al. 2007; Blatter 2018). Empirical approaches have also been developed in sociology (e.g. Berger & Luckman 1966; Boltanski & Thevenot 2006). Empirical studies emphasize the subjective aspect of legitimacy: if people believe that existing political

orders or laws are appropriate and worthy of obedience, then those orders and laws are legitimate. As Birch (2001: 54-55) notes, in times of peace the question of legitimacy and the nature of political authority are not seriously problematic for ordinary citizens in modern democratic states, wherein legitimacy is embodied in a complex system of laws and administrative regulations that most citizens accept without question.

Max Weber (1914/1968: 212-216, 952-954), one of the most prominent legitimacy researchers, distinguishes among three main sources of legitimacy, understood as the acceptance of authority and the need to obey its commands. People may have faith in a particular political or social order because it has existed for a long time (*tradition*), because they have faith in the rulers unique personal qualities, (*charisma*), such as heroism or attractiveness, or because they trust in its legality (*rational-legal*), i.e., that a system is based on stated and binding principles that are consistently applied in the elections, administration, and legal system. Weber proposes that legitimacy is an important explanatory category for political science, because faith in a particular social order produces social regularities that are more stable than those that result from the pursuit of self-interest or from the habitual rule-following (Fabienne 2017). Even though Weber developed his theory in very different societal and political circumstances, these three basic sources of legitimacy are relevant even today.

Davis Easton (1965) based his modern analysis of legitimacy of institutions on system analysis. Some of the latest studies that follow a somewhat similar institutional analysis come from Pippa Norris (2009) and her network; these approaches will be analyzed in detail below.

One division of legitimacy studies involves crisis approaches, which often have a distinctive political orientation (Schumpeter 1952; Habermas 1976; Bell 1976; Offe 1972, 1996; Rose & Peters 1978; Huntington 1996; Castells 1996/2000, 2018). What seems to be common to all these theories is that they present their claims on a very general level and most often by using limited and questionable evidence. The explanations of the social phenomena in these theories are somewhat loose and the possibility of validification required for empirical research can be doubted. Some of the general claims presented in crisis theories may be interpreted as true in some states in some historical situation but it is another question whether they have been able to form a general theory of the political development of societies. This is not to say that these theories are useless, for example Huntington's theory on fundamental differences in value basis between major civilizations was once almost forgotten but has recently been reintroduced and has risen again to be a relevant explanation on the development of international politics. However, for an empirical analysis of Finnish forest policy, the theories of legitimacy crises at the national level or between different cultures are too general and abstract as well as difficult to operationalize meaningfully for the purposes of observation.

Mark Suchman (1995) has developed a different approach of legitimacy study that is especially popular in the USA and in business studies; it is based on organizational sociology. In the forest sector, Suchman's theory is used especially in empirical evaluative studies focusing on (private sector instrument) forest certification (e.g., Cashore 2002; Bernstein & Cashore 2007). In addition to organizational studies, the same approach has been applied to institutions (however, there is not always a clear difference between them). Suchman defines three types of legitimacy: pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy, and cognitive legitimacy. The approaches of political science and Suchman are different, but it can be noted that two sub-classes of Suchman's moral legitimacy, namely consequential legitimacy and procedural legitimacy, have similarities with analyses of political legitimacy

and a third subclass, namely personal legitimacy is related to Weber's charismatic legitimacy. Suchman's cognitive legitimacy is somewhat similar to Easton's diffuse support. Suchman's approach, however, is not analyzed further in this study because the theory is probably more useful in the studies of organizations than regarding governmental institutions.

Legitimacy is an abstract concept and a difficult phenomenon to measure accurately. Therefore, it is often measured indirectly by asking about political trust or confidence (Blatter 2018, see also Harre 1999; Warren 1999a, 1999b). Most empirical studies on legitimacy use quantitative methodology, such as surveys in the form of posted questionnaires and structured interviews (Inglehart 1977, 1990, 1999, 2008; Weatherford 1992; Klingemann 1999; Lillbacka 1999; Sänkiaho 2006; Miller & Listhaug 2009). Case-study methodology and semi-structured interviews (such as Article III in this dissertation) have also been sometimes applied. There are also a number of evaluative studies focused on institutions, organizations, and political programs, for instance, that most often apply predefined categories and measures. Psychology of legitimacy uses also experimental settings.

The strength of quantitative approaches is the possibility to generalize observations of whole populations with some precautions related to the representativeness of data. The weakness is that they are fixed to predefined questions and categories (however, open-ended questions can also be applied). Without relevant theorization there is no guarantee that the analysis is correct and unbiased. The answers given may also be sensitive to formulations of survey questions and other stimuli, such as given information.

The strength of text-analytical qualitative approaches is that when using naturally occurring data, it is possible to observe the process of legitimation or illegitimation in the terms that actors choose to use themselves, and not only limited to fixed categories (Hurrelmann et al. 2005a; Schneider at al. 2007). The empirical forms of legitimacy as they occur in actual situations are not necessarily related to normative criteria in the same way as predefined in theories and therefore these criteria might be of limited relevance for citizens' attribution of legitimacy, at least in some cases. In other words, the theoretical assumptions on the principles may differ from those that are important for citizens in real life. As described above, there is also a great deal of variation among theorists themselves as the theorization comes with shorter and longer lists of principles. Democracy researchers such as Dahl (1998) and Sänkiaho (2006) have also called for more understanding on how democracy and legitimacy are actually perceived by citizens. Nonetheless, the key point here is not to reject theories but to develop the understanding of the connections between theories, observations, and classifications of empirical findings.

The overall picture of legitimacy studies is that the concept of legitimacy is often used narrowly and fragmentarily. Most studies have been limited to analyzing two or only a few dimensions of legitimacy while real world legitimacy seems to be a more complex phenomenon than often assumed. Even the key definitions of central theoretical concepts appear to differ significantly among theorists. Furthermore, the study by Lillbacka (1999) is the only political legitimacy theory of those analyzed above that explicitly includes anything related to natural resources and natural environment (namely environmental protection). Therefore, it seems there is a need for a more extensive and valid framework for legitimacy both for empirical studies and for a more comprehensive understanding of legitimacy.

2.3.2 Patterns of legitimacy as sources of political support

A starting point for the following analysis is with the definitions and frameworks by Hurrelmann et al. (2005b, see also Schneider et al. 2007 and Bekkers & Edwards 2007). The general approach in this study is holistic in the sense that legitimacy is analyzed in order to cover the widest range of legitimacy arguments. As Ostrom (2005: 66) notes, "the number of potential evaluative criteria is large".

In the vocabulary of Schneider et al. (2007), the term "pattern of legitimacy" refers to supporting arguments. For the most part, these consist of normative principles, such as popular sovereignty, accountability, or responsiveness. However, they may also include references to traditional, charismatic, or religious authorities, as in seminal studies by Weber (1914/1968); or to culture-specific figurative language, such as health, machine, or organic metaphors (cf. Schneider et al. 2007: 152-153).

The general understanding is that political institutions are mostly evaluated by normative principles (the literature often uses expressions such as values, social values, societal values, criteria, normative concepts, regime principles, moral principles, justifications, ideals, benchmarks, standards, and yardsticks synonymously). The concepts of norms and institutions are sometimes used in the same meaning as principles, but this is a source of much confusion and therefore at least the regime principles and institutions should be kept as separate as Norris (1999) proposes.

In the context of this study, the concept of pattern refers to those normative principles that are used in the (il)legitimation of former, existing, or proposed forest sector public institutions. The normative principles are abstract and idealized in nature. They are socially constructed and they can be assumed to be understood differently among different groups (van Dijk 1997). One formulation of the same idea is that principles are depicted as "essentially contested concepts, open to multiple meanings", so that "there is no consensus about which values should be nominated as most important […] democracy means different things to different people in different societies" (Norris 1999: 11, see also Saward 2003, Hurrelmann et al. 2007a). The principles can be assumed to be gradually modified as they are used in practice and tested especially at the times of crisis (Easton 1965: 196-200).

2.3.3 Objects of political support

Norris (1999) and Linde & Ekman (2003) have argued that the objects of political support have been insufficiently separated in empirical studies of democracy. One of the most influential classifications was developed by Norris (1999) and her co-writers, who broadened Easton's (1965) three-fold distinction between different objects of support (political community, regime, and authorities) into a five-dimensional category. Norris distinguishes between five objects of support: the political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors (see also Westle 2007 and Booth & Seligson 2009, who have found similar conceptual structures by statistical analysis). The concept of support is understood as multidimensional and the different objects are assumed to exist in a continuum. In Eastonian terms, this continuum ranges from diffuse support for the national community to specific support for particular political actors. When the theoretical classifications were compared and assessed also in the empirical analysis using textual data, some shortcomings were recognized in each of them and new formulations were added and are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Objects of political support (modified from Rantala 2012).

Object	Type of support	
	Original definition by Norris (1999), formulated by Linde & Ekman (2003)	New definition revised by Rantala (2012)
The political community	A basic attachment to the nation beyond the present institutions of government and a general willingness to cooperate together politically.	A basic attachment to the nation beyond the present institutions of government and a general willingness to cooperate together politically.
Regime principles	Support for democracy as a principle or an ideal (i.e., as the most appropriate form of government).	Support for regime principles as ideals: (A) democracy or alternative forms of government (i.e., as the most appropriate form of government), (B) democratic and alternative forms of participation as public participation procedures, and (C) other normative principles.
Regime performance	Support for how the democratic political system functions in practice.	Support for how the political system, political community, regime institutions, or actors function in practice.
Regime institutions	Attitudes toward governments, parliaments, the executive, the legal system and police, the state bureaucracy, political parties, and the military.	Support for regime institutions, i.e., governments; political parties; parliaments and public decision-making processes; elections and other actualized forms of participation; legislation and voluntary/contractual governance instruments; the executive and the state bureaucracy; the legal system, police, and the military; and free press.
Political actors	Specific support for political actors or authorities.	Specific support for political actors or authorities as individuals.

In short, the contemporary understanding is that the conceptualization of support for political community and actors is relatively undisputed, whereas the conceptualization of support for the regime, i.e. the political system itself, is less clear. The support for particular actors is commonly understood not to belong in the category of genuine legitimacy because it is considered to be normal that the support for individual actors can or even should vary.

The political community, the regime, and its core institutions are included in almost all definitions of legitimacy in some way (see the comprehensive review by Westle 2007). Many studies have applied variants of Easton's (1965) original classification to conceptualize the regime (Westle 2007). This classification (Easton 1965: 190-211) suggests that the support for a regime consists of support for the "regime values and principles" (ideology of political system), "regime norms" ("procedures that are expected and acceptable in processing and implementation of demands"), and "authority roles" (roles of political authorities in making and implementing decisions).

With regard to the category of regime principles, the classification by Norris (1999) seems to have missed an essential component of regime support, namely Easton's "regime norms", which refer to political participation and related procedures. The operationalization of regime norms is involved with the formal institutions of participation and representation, which include the parliament, elections, and governmental working groups. The regime norms related to participation are in this study termed as "democratic and alternative forms of participation" (class (B) in Tables 2-4) while more general support for government is gathered into the class (A).

The informal, mostly customary and citizen-driven forms of participation, such as direct participation and boycott campaigns — which happen to be relatively common in forest conservation-related participation — also belong to the category of regime norms in this study (although those have not been explicitly discussed by Easton 1965 or by Norris 1999). It is good to note, however, that it is dependent on the definitions of legitimacy and especially freedom of expression, whether direct action should be included in the analyses of political legitimacy, which in more traditional political science have often been limited to most central public institutions that require legitimacy because they have coercive power. However, it can be added that even in the most liberal societies there are always some legal and customary limits to acceptable behavior and therefore also the voluntary forms of (protest) participation are possible subjects to intervention by public authorities. Furthermore, because direct action is discussed actively and they share opinions in the data of this study, it is natural to include it here.

In addition to procedural principles of democracy, the relevant conceptualization of regime principles for empirical analysis must also cover principles that are related to substantive outputs and outcomes; these include welfare, effectiveness, distributive justice and, at least in the case of forest issues, environmental values and sustainable development (class (C) in Tables 2-4).

To summarize, the regime principles can be observed at three different levels: (A) at a relatively general ideological level (support for democracy or alternative forms of government), (B) in terms of democratic and alternative forms of participation (support for different public participation procedures), and (C) by focusing on different normative principles; these include procedural principles of democracy and principles related to substantive outputs and respective outcomes (support for the normative principles) (Tables 2-4).

(Note that in Article I there is an unfortunate mistake in the Abstract in which the *regime principles* have unintentionally been titled as *regime norms* in the list of the objects of political support. The sentence should read: "The objects of political support can be classified as political community, regime principles, regime institutions, and actors".)

2.3.4 Double roles of principles and institutions as objects and patterns

It is important to note that both the regime principles and institutions shown in Table 2 can be understood in two alternative ways: first, as objects of support or denial of support (Norris 1999) and second, as a pattern (source) of legitimacy or illegitimacy, which forms the basis for supporting arguments by which the objects of regimes are evaluated.

In the first case, the regime principles can be supported as ideals in a general sense ("support for democracy as the best form of government", see Norris 1999, Linde & Ekman 2003). An evaluation can also refer to support for the ideology of a certain political system, if it fits with the evaluator's ideology, or rejected if the evaluator is a supporter of some partisan ideology (Easton 1965: 194-200, 289-293). My suggestion is that the evaluation of regime principles as objects as characterized by Norris (1999) could be termed as "support for ideals" or "evaluation of ideals" for clarification (see Table 3).

In the second case, the all regime principles have at least potential to serve as a pattern (source) of legitimation that is a benchmark of legitimacy in the evaluation of other political objects. In a practical text analysis, almost any found evaluation includes some principles that the evaluator applies as a benchmark of an ideal state of institutional arrangements. The evaluation of the perceived functioning of systems and institutions can be titled as a "performance evaluation" (see Table 3 and section 2.3.5 below).

Table 3. Support for regime principles as ideals and for their realization in practice (modified from Rantala 2012).

	Ideals	Performance
(A) Democracy and alternative forms of government	Support for democracy as an ideal form of decision-making or support for alternative ideals	Support for the realization of democracy or its alternatives in practice
(B) Democratic and alternative forms of participation	Support for democratic and alternative public participation procedures as ideals	Support for the realization of democratic and alternative public participation procedures in practice
(C) Normative principles		
Core regime principles	Support for core regime principles as ideals	Support for the realization of core regime principles in practice
Input principles Throughput principles Output principles }	Support for principles of political decision-making and output/outcomes as ideals	Support for the realization of principles of political decision-making and output/outcomes in practice

The categorization of regime principles only as objects of support by Norris (1999) is a potential source of misunderstandings in text analyses because it does not explicitly recognize the central role of all regime principles as a source of legitimacy in the performance evaluations of institutions. Easton (1965: 286-310), however, discusses the sources of legitimacy in greater detail.

Furthermore, the regime institutions are not merely objects of legitimation but they also serve as patterns (sources) of legitimation (see Figure 4). Schneider et al. (2007: 137) maintain that "a regime's political institutions and elites play a double role. One the one hand, they are objects whose legitimacy is evaluated in — and (re)produced, challenged, or transformed by — these discourses. On the other hand, the norms embodied in political institutions and the claims made by political elites — in parliamentary debates, government declarations, press conferences, and so on — are themselves prominent in legitimacy-related communication (and frequently cited by the media) even if they are not shared by other discourse participants."

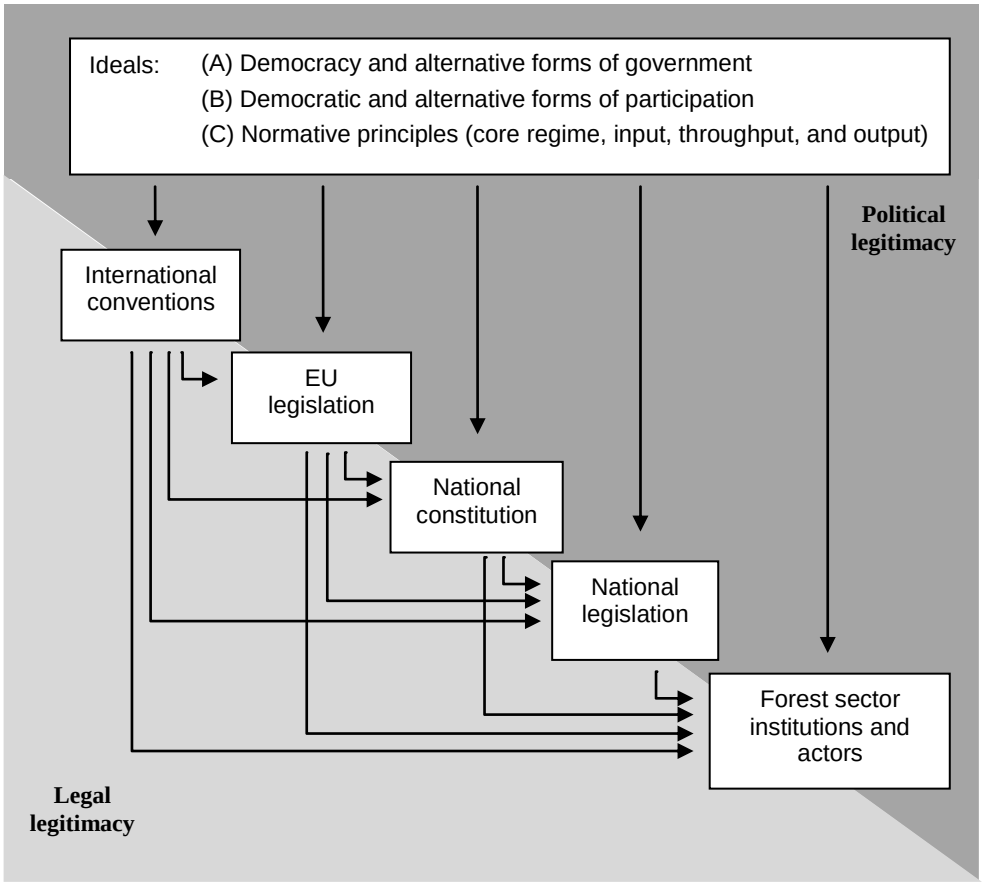

Figure 4. Potential sources and objects of (il)legitimacy in the forest sector and their hierarchy (modified from Rantala 2012).

In other words, forest sector institutions can also be evaluated, in addition to the regime principles (political legitimacy), through domestic or international legal institutions (perceived legality or legal legitimacy) (see Figure 4). However, also the legitimacy of all legal institutions can be evaluated by different regime principles.

The institutions that are lower in rank can be legitimized with a broader arsenal of arguments than the supreme legal institutions. It is important to note that if the legal institutions, such as those at the EU level, are perceived as illegitimate they can be applied as an important source of illegitimacy for the audience that shares the same perception of illegitimacy. The same applies to other patterns of legitimation, for instance liberal democracy may be a source of illegitimacy for the proponents of an authoritarian regime.

2.3.5 Performance evaluations

The basic meaning of performance is the support for how the democratic political system functions in practice. After Norris (1999) included an explicit concept of performance among the objects of support for regimes, considerable efforts have been made to separate performance from other forms of support, such as support for the ideal of democracy, support for particular occupants of political positions and governments, and benefit-oriented ("specific") support (see especially Linde & Ekman 2003 and the discussion on class of "diffuse/specific support" by Westle 2007). However, "what conceptually and operationally constitutes a measure of government performance is open to discussion" (Miller & Listhaug 1999: 205). Narrow definitions (Lillbacka 1999: 86-108) focus on economic measures, often using the concepts of effectiveness and distribution of favors. In contrast, more open definitions refer to the response of ideologically-induced expectations (Easton 1965: 293-295) and the performance of a system in terms of legality and human rights (Linde & Ekman 2003: 405).

This study suggests that the performance evaluations should be understood to cover all evaluations concerning the success and fairness of policy-making and political institutions. There is no good reason to limit the empirical analyses of performance evaluations to only involve certain principles. Therefore, this category should include all evaluations ranging from the realization of democratic and other decision-making procedures to the evaluations of other outputs and (intended and unintended) outcomes of processes. My definition is similar to public policy and program evaluation studies (e.g., Vedung 1997: 247-263).

If the abovementioned definition of performance is accepted, the classification by Norris (1999) is not the most informative, because it suggests performance to be in the continuum of political objects. In explorative text analysis, the category of performance should rather be understood as a separate dimension that is an inherent part of almost any evaluation of a political community, institutions, and actors (see Table 3, cf. Miller & Listhaug 1999; Westle 2007, see different definitions of performance by Easton 1965: 293-295; Lipset 1983; Lillbacka 1999: 86-108; Linde & Ekman 2003). Note that numerous studies refer to outputs and outcomes as the performance dimension of legitimacy, which can be a serious source of conceptual confusion.

In the empirical parts of this study the concept of regime principle refers to all normative principles found in the data when analyzing people's evaluations of public policies. These findings are further summarized as groups of social values of which a group titled as core regime principles is one sub-class. The terms value and principle are used synonymously in this study. Basically, the performance evaluations may be positive, negative, or mixed (see chapter 3).

2.3.6 Categorization of regime principles

This study suggests a categorization of patterns of legitimacy for the purposes of empirical analysis as presented in Table 4. The basic categories included are depicted above and include: (A) democracy and alternative forms of government, (B) forms of public participation procedures, and (C) normative principles. These principles consist of the following classes: 1) core regime principles, 2) input principles, 3) throughput principles, and 4) output principles. Another dimension separates 1) democratic, 2) extra-democratic, and 3) counter-democratic patterns of legitimacy.

The category described above is based on the framework developed by Hurrelmann et al. (2005a, 2005b) and Schneider et al. (2007), in which the principles (or patterns) of legitimacy are cross-tabulated into a two-dimensional table. The first dimension is formed according to Scharpf's (1997: 153-155) dichotomy of input and output legitimacy, and the second dimension consists of democratic and non-democratic legitimacy. The input-oriented pattern refers to "the process of decision-making, in particular to the actors involved and the procedures followed" and an output-oriented pattern refers to "the results of the process, their quality and consequences" (Hurrelmann et al. 2005b; note that their definitions differ from those of Easton 1965: 353 and Scharpf 1997: 153-157 and 1999: 6-21). This input/output distinction was found to be useful but, following Bekkers and Edwards (2007; cf. Schmidt 2006, 2015; Schmidt & Wood 2019), a third class, namely the throughput dimension, was added between the input/output dimensions in order to improve clarity (Tables 3 and 4). In this study, input legitimacy is defined, following "a standard model" of policy process (e.g., Ripley 1995) and Eastonian system analysis, as referring to an agenda setting stage in which the essential decisions are: Who are the people involved in the decisions and how is the agenda formulated? The throughput stage of political processes is associated with how decisions ought to be made, also known as decision rules. The output dimension is related to normative characteristics of process results (output and outcomes).

Furthermore, a group of principles, denoted here as the "core regime principles", was separated from the principles related to the democratic processes (see Tables 3 and 4). Almost all studies on democracy suggest that the democratic system necessitates a set of general values that are often depicted as liberal democratic values or values of constitutional democracy. The values that can be considered to be foundational by nature include at the least national sovereignty, equality, legality, and political and human rights, especially freedom of speech. These values are useful to separate from the values of democratic processes because they can be understood as 1) preconditions for any democratic political system and as 2) principal values that should be enforced through any political process, and also 3) preferred outcomes that should be consolidated by processes (Easton 1965: 194-200; Norris 1999: 11; Scharpf 1999: 6-21; Hurrelmann et al. 2005b: 10).

The second dimension described by Hurrelmann et al. (2005a, 2005b) categorizes legitimacy evaluations into democratic and non-democratic classes. This study suggests that the category of non-democratic legitimacy would be further divided into two categories; these are: 1) extra-democratic and 2) counter-democratic forms of decision-making. The former is supplementary or neutral and the latter is complementary to democracy.

Table 4. Categorization of regime principles and examples of the most typical principles (modified from Rantala 2012).

	Democratic	*Extra-democratic*	*Counter-democratic*
(A) Democracy and alternative forms of government (What are legitimate forms of government?)	Democracy	Market system, corporatism, bureaucracy, and expertocracy	Autocracies, religious regimes, and military juntas
(B) Forms of participation (What are legitimate forms of participation?)	Electoral and participatory procedures, organization of citizens into democratic associations	Demonstrations and boycott campaigns as public participation procedures	Direct action and political violence as public participation procedures
(C) Normative principles			
Core regime principles (What are preconditions and basic rights?)	Freedom of speech, equality, national sovereignty, separation of powers	Property rights, everyman's right, distributive rights, free markets, national and international legality, forerunnership	Limitations of basic liberal-democratic rights
Input characteristics of political decision-making (Who are involved in setting the agenda and how is the agenda formulated?)	Popular sovereignty, popular participation, representation, openness, urgency	Leadership by experts, participation by consumer decisions in markets	Dominance (by vested interests, charismatic leaders, religious authorities, or extremists)
Throughput characteristics of political decision-making (How decisions ought to be made?)	Decision-making based on majority and consensus decision rules, safeguard of minority opinions, veto rights	Decision-making based on markets, expert knowledge, and scientific facts	Decision-making based on traditions and religious orders
Output characteristics of political decision-making and output /outcomes (What are the substantial output/outcomes and contribution to input?)	Accountability, responsiveness, cooperation, commitment, comprehensiveness, possibility to appeal, understandability	Welfare, employment, economic growth, effectiveness, distributive justice, environmental values, ecological, economic and social sustainability	Lack of accountability and responsiveness of public authorities and officials, and benefits for vested interests

The major democratic principles include popular sovereignty, popular participation, representation, openness, accountability, responsiveness, and understandability (see a detailed description in Rantala 2011). Democratic decision-making is also based on majority and consensus decision rules and the safeguarding of minority opinions. The major extra-democratic principles include legality, welfare, effectiveness, distributive justice, values of nature, and environmental sustainability-related principles.

It should be noted that in the empirical analysis the principles may fall into different categories, depending on how they are perceived by the evaluators. For example, the decision-making that is characterized by the dominance of experts, by the free markets, by the public administration, and the use of traditions as guidelines may be perceived as extra-democratic or counter-democratic.

2.4 Psychology of legitimacy

Social psychological studies have contributed studies of social values and legitimacy via several research orientations, especially the study of procedural justice and distributive justice (Jost & Mayor 2001a, 2001b; Sears et al. 2003; Jasso et al. 2016; Vermun & Steensma 2016). The third common form of justice, namely retributive justice (Wenzel & Okimoto 2016), focused on fairness in punishment of wrongs, is less analyzed in political studies; however, its importance is highlighted in legal studies. Restorative justice that focuses mostly on restoring social relations has been studied less (Cohen 2016). Of these concepts, this study focuses on principles of procedural justice and distributive justice as points of comparison regarding empirical findings but also some findings related to retributive and restorative justice are reported shortly.

According to Mikula (2001), justice in general means that people receive what they are entitled to, or deserve, on the basis of who they are and what they have done. Although this may sound clear in abstract terms, this definition leaves open what exactly particular people are entitled to get. Justice can be unambiguously defined only on an abstract level. The abstract definitions are open to multiple translations into concrete terms. For that reason, it is likely that different people or groups differ in their justice judgments of given conditions or circumstances. Even if views of justice are socially shared, this does not change the basically subjective nature of judgments of justice and injustice. Therefore it is meaningful to study how people use concepts of justice in particular political discussions in real life contexts, such as forest-related discussions in the case of my study.

Procedural justice (or procedural fairness) is focused on the fairness and transparency of decision-making processes. Leventhal's (1980) six rules of fair procedures are commonly applied and empirically tested. Procedures will be regarded just if they ensure consistent treatment across persons and over time, the utilization of accurate information, the suppression of personal biases among decision-makers, the existence of appeal mechanisms by which wrong decisions can be corrected, the representation of the affected parties in the decision-making process, and compatibility with fundamental moral and ethical values. Related to procedural justice, the findings of informational justice suggest that perceived justice includes truthfulness and the importance of the adequacy of explanations during the decision-making process (Colquit 2001) and Bies & Moag (1986) have found that interactional justice dependent on respect, propriety, truthfulness, and giving justifications in general.

Mikula (2001) states that perceived procedural justice has a variety of positive consequences. Procedural justice promotes people's acceptance of decisions, their long-term commitment to agreements, and their willingness to cooperate with groups they belong to. Perceived procedural justice also enhances the perceived legitimacy of civil authorities, institutions, and rules, as well as people's willingness to defer to authorities and their decisions. Procedural justice also improves people's satisfaction with the outcomes they receive, even if the decision procedures cause unfavorable outcomes for them (Mikula (2001: 8065). Procedural justice is commonly understood to be closely related to democratic decision-making processes, legal processes, and public administration.

Distributive justice is concerned with fairness in the distribution of rights or resources as well as the distribution of burdens. The benefits and harms may be tangible or intangible. The perceived fairness of distribution is based on comparisons between people or groups of people. Distributive justice is commonly understood to include at least three main components. These include equity, equality, and need; however, Deutsch (1975, 1985) mentions as many as over ten variants. Equity means that outcomes should be based on their invested inputs, such as time or money, and merits earned. When applying the principle of equality, all group members should be given an equal share of the rewards and costs, independent of their contributions. The principle of need suggests that those in greatest need should be provided with the necessary resources, regardless of their input.

Legitimacy researchers in political science have also shown some interest in distributive issues (Scharpf 1997: 162-163; Miller & Listhaug 1999) but — when considering their importance to policies and huge popularity of political philosophy related especially to distributive issues (Rawls 1971) — perhaps not sufficiently. Distributive justice is also an essential part of environmental justice (see Dobson 1998, 1999) because the cost of the degradation of the environment can lead to illnesses and reduce quality of life (Miller 1999). Furthermore, nature conservation legislation may cause economic losses when limiting the use of property.

In the empirical part of this study, Table 4 serves as a basic frame of reference for the analysis and classification of observations concerning legitimacy. The concept of political legitimacy consists of several sub-concepts; these include welfare, environmental legitimacy, democratic legitimacy, distributive justice and fair markets, good governance, and core regime principles. Of these, democratic legitimacy is related to all democratic categories of framework while welfare, environmental legitimacy, and distributive justice fall into the category of extra-democratic output legitimacy. Core regime principles refer to national and international legality, basic rights, and fair markets, which can be understood as preconditions for democracy and the political system in general. Good governance is analyzed by using social psychological terms of procedural justice and the analysis of distributive issues also applies social psychological conceptualization. Furthermore, the concepts of retributive and restorative justice are tested (however, not found important in the data of this study).

3 METHODOLOGY

In the early stage of this study (Article III), the analysis of interviews and the textual corpus started with an analysis of normative expressions by using classification by Hallamaa (1999). The analysis was continued with analytic induction (Creswell 2003: 131-133, Koskinen et al. 2005: 233-241) and analysis of the actors' value positions. VanDeVeer & Pierce (1998: 1-15) was also a very useful source for separating the descriptive and moral/normative expressions.

The analysis of letters to editors (Article II and section 5) started with an inductive analysis of a subset of data gathered in an early stage of the study. The study proceeded gradually with intensive working cycles, using studies of theories and by gathering more data from other papers and from comments to the National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999). The practical application of the analysis was close to the idea of abduction (Douven 2017), namely gradual reasoning leading to the best explanation and most comprehensive understanding, covering normative arguments on the whole set of data. The coding was implemented by using computer program Atlas.ti 4.2.

This study tested several interpretation theories and other related approaches that combined some degree of interpretation and other social and political theories with at least some potential to legitimacy studies; these include Connolly (1974/1993), Chilton & Schäffner (1997), Condor & Antaki (1997), van Dijk (1998), Titsher et al. (2000), Yanow (2000), Hajer (2003), Chilton (2004), Richardson (2007), and Saldana (2009). These may be very useful in other similar studies but most were set aside when the approach by Krell-Laluhová & Schneider (2004), Krell- Laluhová et al. (2005), Hurrelmann et al. (2005b), and Schneider et al. (2007) was discovered.

The analysis applied in Article II combined interpretative qualitative analysis and quantitative content analyses: both citations from data and frequencies of observations were reported in detail. The results in that article were organized according to a parallel theoretical analysis concerning theories of legitimacy and democracy (presented more explicitly in Article I and sections 2.3-2.4 in this study). The first study (Article III) was by nature a more explorative qualitative analysis with fewer guidelines from political theories.

Research topics, objectives of study, and research questions define how the analysis of data should be organized. The unit of analysis depends on which issues a researcher means to highlight. The unit of analysis can vary from a single expression related to some single value, or it may be a longer written text, or interview, or even a collection of texts from a single writer or organization. The selected manner of coding in large part defines what things can be associated with themselves and which relations can be reported. Of course, there are often possibilities for using several different approaches simultaneously, but especially in the case of larger data sets time constraints may limit multiple analyses.

The interpretation and coding of textual data can be used at least in the following issues as bases of classifications (see Titsher et al. 2000: 58-60 for more potential classes):

1) Elements of political order (most often a regime and/or its institutions and political programs)
2) Patterns of legitimation (most often normative principles; may also focus on some sub-class of principles)
3) People (laymen, actors, groups of actors, or their organizations)
4) Topics related to different commodities and forms of use
5) Practices
6) Topics related to spheres of private or social life
7) Conflicts among actors

The results of the print media data were organized according to a "pattern of legitimacy", referring to supporting arguments in Schneider et al. (2007). These consisted mostly of normative principles such as popular sovereignty, accountability, or responsiveness, but at least sometimes they may also include references to traditional, charismatic, or religious authorities, as in seminal studies by Weber (1914/1968), or to culture-specific figurative language. The starting point for coding the data was that an evaluative legitimation statement (Schneider et al. 2007) has the following structure: [Object A] is (il)legitimate because of [Pattern B]. The basic units of statements can be identified and classified as a "legitimation grammar" that consists of 1) the element of political order as the object, 2) the "pattern of legitimation" that serves as a supporting argument, and 3) the assessment (or performance evaluation) that is basically positive or negative. Empirical analyses aimed to cover the widest range of legitimacy arguments in order to get a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. In the early stages of this study (Article III), there was limited comprehension of the concept of legitimacy but values, ideologies, and value positions were used as theoretical concepts in mapping the research area.

The coding of evaluations followed Saldana (2009: 58-60), who have called the analysis of the performance evaluations "magnitude coding" and have also presented alternatives between the two extreme evaluations, namely neutral and mixed evaluations. Richardson (1997: 157-159) have proposed an explicit separation of evaluations concerning the legitimacy of past, present, and future states of affairs (cf. Miller & Listhaug 1999). Saldana (2009) have added a fourth, future-oriented element that is a "recommendation".

In Articles I and II, and in section 5.3 focusing on public discussion, the coding has been produced according to the present state. The magnitude coding used classes positive, negative, and mixed; the last class included evaluations that discuss both positive and negative aspects, and some rare arguments that express a pattern but no interpretable performance evaluation. The unit of analysis was a value statement that varied from one sentence to tens of sentences by length. Table 5 presents two examples how the interpretation and respective coding was implemented. More examples can be found in Article I. Additionally, the key topics of writings were also coded according to the main argument and are presented shortly in section 5.1 in order to support comparisons with previous studies from home and abroad.

Table 5. Examples of observations and their translations into form of legitimation statement (modified from Rantala 2012).

Examples from data	Translations
"In contemporary society, there is clear order for the National Forest Programme in the search for consensus on how the Finnish welfare and employment can be sustainably increased."	The National Forest Programme *[object: political program]* is legitimate *[performance evaluation: present situation positive]* because it increases consensus *[pattern: democratic throughput principle "consensus"]* on how the Finnish *[political community "Finland"]* welfare and employment can be sustainably increased *[patterns: extra-democratic output principles "welfare", "employment", "sustainability", and "economic growth"].*
"The National Forest Programme has an especially important role because the Finnish program is one of the first of its kind. Therefore it should serve as an example for the others. Is the emphasis on wood production the message that the Finnish forest sector wants to send in a situation, in which Finland had a possibility to introduce a good example in the consideration of social and ecological sustainability."	The National Forest Programme *[object: political program]* is illegitimate *[performance evaluation: present situation negative, proposed change positive]* because it does not serve as an example for the other countries [political communities: "Finland" and 'other countries"] and because the overemphasis of economic welfare over social and ecological sustainability *[patterns: democratic core regime principle "moral forerunnership", extra-democratic output principles "welfare", and "social and ecological sustainability"].*

4 DATA OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

4.1 Letters to editors and comments to the National Forest Programme 2010 (Article II)

This study explores the print media discussion on forests, based on 530 letters to editors published in three newspapers and in one journal (see Table 6). The print media data are supplemented with 140 comments given during the process of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999). The data sampling was planned to include media that represent laymen and representatives of organizations, urban and rural population, forestry and environmental actors, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This unique and very large set of data on public discussion represents a period at the turn of millennium when there was a lot of public discussion published in quality print media; after the global financial crisis started in 2008, the sections for letters to editors were

almost discontinued because the finances of several major newspapers collapsed. Simultaneously, after the introduction of social media (especially Facebook) in Finland from 2007, many people started to spend more and more time on the Internet and the emphasis of public discussion has moved more to social media. However, the rules and contexts for online public discussion are completely different from so-called old-fashioned, relatively tightly moderated quality discussions where people mostly used their own names and opened up their background organizations, and also many prominent forest and nature conservation researchers participated in discussions.

Of the papers studied, Helsingin sanomat is the largest newspaper in Finland, Maaseudun tulevaisuus is a middle-sized newspaper, and Vihreä lanka is a weekly journal of the Green League of Finland; all of these are published in Helsinki. Turun sanomat is a middle-sized newspaper published in the fifth-largest city in the country. Helsingin sanomat reaches 25% of Finns and 66% of the population of the Helsinki region (HS… 2006), and the audience of Turun sanomat represents most social groups in southwestern Finland (Mediatiedot 2005). Maaseudun tulevaisuus is published by the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK and it especially represents the rural population and forest owners of Finland (Maaseudun…2005). Vihreä lanka is a small party journal with a circulation of 4,000. These data sets were supplemented with comments received during the preparation of the Finland's National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999), because these texts included more non-governmental and governmental organizations of the forest sector that were not very well represented in other data. To a large extent, the same organizations still exist today, and they have relatively similar goals (except a new goal, the mitigation of climate change, which has become mainstream in almost every political and public organization in Finland).

The selected data consisted of those writings that included a clear reference to forest use or conservation, as well as those involved in national forest policy or forest-related nature conservation policy. The texts related to urban parks were excluded from the data because municipal-level government was not the topic of this study. The word layman/layperson as used here denotes that the writer used only his or her own name or a pseudonym with no reference to organizations, companies, etc.

Table 6. Description of the data.

	Circulation	Publisher**	Sample size	Sample period
Turun sanomat	112,000	Independent	149	1997-2004
Vihreä lanka	4000	Green League of Finland	23	1998-2004
Maaseudun tulevaisuus	82,000	Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK)	181	2003-2004
Helsingin sanomat	422,000	Independent	177	2002-2004
National Forest Programme 2010	—	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	140	1998

4.2 Interviews and bibliographical data (Article III)

The study of organized actors was based on a review of interview data (primary data) and bibliographical data (secondary data) on the organized interest groups. The primary data were collected in the form of qualitative semi-structured interviews with 13 informants. The secondary data consisted of programs and plans of the main organized interest groups.

The interviewees represented interest groups in the forest sector, NGOs, and the administration. The stimulus in the interviews was a list of 18 themes provided in advance. The questions were formulated to identify the perceptions of the present and future state of forests and forest policy. The respondents were asked to reflect on the questions primarily from the viewpoint of their background organisation. Secondarily, they were asked to define the similarities and differences between the opinions of the other actors. The respondents were encouraged to also bring up additional issues outside the questionnaire.

The sample was selected partly by using snowball sampling: the first interviewees suggested others, etc. Each interview took two to three hours and was recorded and transcribed in detail. The respondents were ensured anonymity and offered an opportunity to add or modify their interview in written form (10-22 pages). Several clarifications were received from most respondents. However, no major changes were made.

4.3 Reliability and possibilities for generalization

Lincoln & Guba (1985) maintain that *trustworthiness* of a qualitative study include several evaluations. These include *credibility* that refers to confidence in the truth of the findings and to the use of *triangulation* of different sources in the data collection. *Transferability* means that the findings may also be applied in some other contexts. *Dependability* means showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. *Confirmability* refers to neutrality of researcher and that the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not by researcher bias, motivation, or interest. Koskinen et al. (2005) add that involvement of peer researchers and the interviewees can be used in the improvement of research and saturation of data is an important sign that a sufficient amount of data has been collected.

The present data has been gathered by triangulating several different data sources. The collection of print media data of letters to editors (Article II) is based on systematic sampling. The media data and comments given during the process of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999) fall in the class of "naturally occurring" data, which means that the data has been produced without the interference of a researcher. The interview data of qualitative semi-structured interviews (Article III) was checked by persons interviewed in transcribed form. The primary data was triangulated by a secondary data.

Similar phenomena on the evaluation of forest-related policies were found in different parts of the data. The discussion in section 6 explicates the similarities and variations within the articles in this dissertation and compares them to other extant studies. The data can be considered to be saturated because most of the phenomena have been observed numerous times. The data and empirical analyses have been described so that the studies can be repeated, except the anonymous interviews in Article III.

The interpretation of observations is verified by relatively broad citations from data in the reports of empirical studies. My colleagues in the research projects have read and commented on the manuscripts and the articles have been peer reviewed anonymously by at

least two reviewers. The study's results have been presented in numerous research seminars and in the meetings of forest policy professionals. The research projects also had steering groups that involved members of 13 different forest-related organizations who gave very useful advice during the project; however, the integrity of independent research was not challenged.

The theoretical and empirical analysis has been developed over a long period of time and is based on a broad selection of literature. The coding of data was very detailed, but I was able — in my own estimation — to avoid over-interpretation in the analysis. The coding and clustering of observations was managed with the computer program Atlas.ti. The principles of coding have been documented in a detailed manner that facilitates the possibility for replicating the study or applying the same coding system in other data.

When considering the empirical results, it has to be taken into account that the letters to editors represent public discussion on forests along with some of the most active citizens, not the whole population. The texts have also been more or less filtered by the editors. The interviews represent central organized actors. These limitations are discussed more in section 6.

5 RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

5.1 Participants and topics of public discussion in print media

The research questions related to public discussion are: Who participates in the forest-related public discussion in Finland? Which organized interest groups participate in discussion, which groups do not participate? Is there differences between the participants in the preparation of the national forest program and public discussion? Are the governmental officials involved in public discussion? Do some groups or single persons dominate the discussion? What are the major topics of discussion?

Section 5 is focused on summarizing the empirical studies of Articles II and III. Furthermore, new results concerning participants and topics of public discussion and the principles applied in the legitimacy evaluations will be presented; these are based on the same data of letters to editors as study II. The major new classes of principles introduced here include welfare, environmental legitimacy, distributive justice and fair markets, good governance, and some new core regime principles. The comments given during the process of the Finland's National Forest Programme 2010 (Ministry... 1999) are not included in this section that is focused on public discussion.

Lively and critical public discussion on forest policies took place in the papers studied (Table 7). Laymen had written over half of texts in all the data (a layperson/layman as used here denotes that the writer used only their own name or a pseudonym with no reference to organizations). In Helsingin Sanomat the frequency of writings by laymen was lower than in other newspapers, and in Vihreä Lanka all writers in my sample were organized actors.

The largest organized group of actors represented well-established national environmental organizations or local offices of international environmental organizations; the rest represented local nature conservation associations and the more radical groups that have not been represented in formal public policy processes. On average, the environmental actors were the most common representatives of organized interest groups; their share was larger than average in Vihreä lanka (a journal of the Green League) but also in Helsingin

sanomat. A large share of those classified as laypersons were also promoting nature conservation as a main topic (and many of them were also commonly known to belong to nature conservation organizations, but in the coding of this study they were classified as laymen if the background organization was not mentioned in the writing; the same applies to politicians). Researchers were especially well-represented in Helsingin sanomat.

Some representatives of private forest owner organizations were represented, but considering the importance of forestry and the forest industry in Finland in general, it was surprising that almost no representatives of the forest industry, professional organizations, or forest owners' associations were found in this data set.

Politicians were well represented, especially before elections; most of the texts were written by well-known forest experts from each major party, the present or ex-Minister, and members of Parliament, but some municipal politicians were also represented.

The public officials and politicians whose party was in charge in the government at the moment of writing made mostly positive evaluations of policies that their organizations support.

Table 7. Distribution of laymen and representatives of organizations in letters to editors in four newspapers, %.

	Turun sanomat (n=149)	*Vihreä lanka (n=23)*	*Maaseudun tulevaisuus (n=181)*	*Helsingin sanomat (n=177)*	*Average (n=530)*
Laymen	*57*	*-*	*69*	*39*	*53*
Forest administration	*1*	*4*	*2*	*6*	*3*
Nature conservation administration	*1*	*-*	*1*	*3*	*2*
Forest industry federations	*1*	*4*	*1*	*1*	*1*
Landowners' federations	*3*	*9*	*4*	*1*	*3*
Landowners' associations	*1*	*-*	*2*	*-*	*1*
Nature conservation organizations	*9*	*48*	*7*	*17*	*13*
Researchers	*3*	*4*	*4*	*23*	*10*
Professional organizations	*-*	*-*	*1*	*1*	*1*
Politicians	*15*	*13*	*8*	*5*	*9*
Other organizations and companies	*7*	*17*	*1*	*5*	*5*

Over 80 % of writers were represented in the data by only one text, and their share of all text was just under 60 %. The activity of writers varied a lot and some writers were very active in more than one paper. Two percent of writers produced over 10% of the texts, and the writings of 5% of writers (19 persons) comprised over one fifth of the full number of texts and an even bigger share of the whole text mass. Half of the most active writers represented prominent nature conservation organizations, but some other especially active persons included a forest owner, a member of Parliament, Minister of Environmental Affairs in office, and two emeritus professors of forestry. Some of the most active writers repeated almost the exact same message in every text over and over again. The full share of texts from Ekometsätalouden liitto (an association focusing on only one single issue, namely continuous cover forestry) was relatively large, considering the size of the association.

Considering that 501 different persons participated in my relatively limited data sample of letters to editors, the overall number of people that participate in forest-related discussions in print media alone must be at least in the thousands.

The most common topics of writings (when coded according to the main argument) were nature conservation activities and ideological issues on the same topic (Table 8). Forestry and activities in the forest sector were almost equally common topics. Recreational use and nature tourism were much less discussed.

A quarter of the nature conservation-related texts concerned ideological discussion on the meaning of nature conservation in general; one fifth of them (as much as 8% of the full number of letters to editors) mostly focused on the conservation of one animal species, namely the Siberian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans L.*); one sixth of the writings were about the Natura 2000 nature conservation program; and one tenth were about the acceptability of nature conservation activism.

Just under one third of forestry-related texts were about methods of silviculture; one sixth were about equitable principles of forest taxation; and the rest of the texts were shared between many topics. Forest-based bioenergy was discussed especially intensively in Turun sanomat and Maaseudun tulevaisuus and at that time all actors, including environmental actors from top to bottom supported increasing the use of bioenergy.

Table 8. Most important topics of texts, %.

	Turun sanomat	Vihreä lanka	Maaseudun tulevaisuus	Helsingin sanomat	Average
Nature conservation activities and ideology	55	48	26	44	41
Forestry and forest sector	22	48	53	38	39
Recreation use and tourism related to forests	11	0	2	12	8
Others	12	4	18	6	12

5.2 Values of organized actors in the interviews

The research questions related to organized actors (Article III): What are the most important values of central organized actors and their organizations concerning Finnish forest policy? What are the major similarities and differences between these organized actors?

Study of organized actors (Article III) identified two dominating value positions, namely the forestry position and the nature position, based on interviews of key actors in forest policy. These competing actors mostly used the same values as justification for their own political demands but the definitions of these values were different and so were the interpretations of how these values have been actualized in policies and decision making. In addition to the polarization, there is also a broad common ground in positions toward general liberal democratic rights, such as freedom of speech and citizens' rights to influence forest policy; as well as on traditional everyman's rights (access to forests). In order to gain more influence in forest policy, both positions make an effort to redefine the concepts in the other's argumentation.

The core values of the forestry position included utility, property rights, and the value of nature, of which the utility — the benefit for humans — dominated argumentation. The actors defined benefits for national economy and employment and particularly the export incomes as central sources of legitimacy. Also the use of full cutting potential based on sustainable forestry was mentioned as an objective. Despite the fact that forestry actors share values related to commercial forestry, they also discussed competing interests related to the price of wood and the rules of fair trade, as well as competition regulations in the wood markets, i.e. fair distribution of welfare. Responsibility was also mentioned as an important principle of legitimacy.

Forest actors were also worried about the unambiguousness of written environmental regulations and the administration's excessive possibilities to interpret the regulations in an arbitrary manner.

The values of nature were important both for the forestry and nature positions but they were defined differently. The nature conservation-oriented actors had an understanding that nature has an intrinsic value independent of its benefits to people. They also complained that utility dominates the field of political discussion, so that the nature values also have to be justified in terms of utility, such as with reference to improved employment via, for instance, nature tourism or recreation.

Direct action was the only form of participation that split opinions significantly. The forest actors were strongly against direct action and associated it with extremism and terrorism, while in the nature position some reformist actors were neither condemning nor praising it, and some of the more radical actors preferred it as an influential form of participation. The legitimacy of using publicity through media split opinions in the same way: the nature actors considered it as an effective means for influencing the public while forest actors criticized especially Finnish environmental actors' seeking of publicity through the media of Central Europe as populist

Arguments concerning good life and virtues were not found in a distinctive form. The study made an initial hypothesis about similarities in modern political ideologies but similar structures as presented in the textbooks were difficult to find in the data. However, considering all supported individual rights and the relatively active role of the state, the views fall somewhat close to liberal democracy and social democracy. None of the actors

doubted the central role of the state in coordinating forest and environmental policy, although the actions that were demanded were different.

A lack of trust was a principal quality of the polarized policy field. Some of the actors saw the representatives of the other side as opponents, clearly separating "us" and "them". Most informants repeatedly used the terms "forestry side" and "nature side". Both sides used strong language and accused each other of acting unfairly. A lack of trust was also reflected in the evaluations of public administration that were in some cases perceived as representing the "other side" in a partial and arbitrary manner.

The actors were not very hopeful concerning a new consensus in forest policy. Instead, they felt that the current multi-stakeholder decision-making system needs reform. The nature actors stated that they have no real possibility to affect the outcome of decision-making process of the national forest program. The proper speed of decision-making was important for both parties, but nature conservation actors would have preferred quicker progress in nature protection, while forest actors perceived that decisions were made too fast. Sweden was presented as a forerunner in forest policy by nature conservation actors.

5.3 Legitimacy evaluations in letters to editors in print media

5.3.1 General

The research questions related to the legitimacy evaluations of forest-related institutions in the letters to editors in the print media are (sections 5 and 6, Article II): What principles of legitimacy do citizens and organized actors use in their evaluations of decision-making in the current forest regime? Which are the most and less common principles? What are the performance evaluations of institutions and decision-making processes? Are there some principles specific only to forest-related decision-making or to Finland? Are the principles applied in a similar manner in public discussion as they are applied in theorization on legitimacy?

The forest-related political institutions and decisions were legitimized by social values and delegitimized by claiming that policy-making does not follow commonly accepted social values, or that it follows some unjustified values or ideologies. Most of the social values mentioned in the discussion have strong general support in Finnish society but there is no unified consensus on how these values should be interpreted and applied in different situations.

The study found that the evaluations of legitimacy in the public discussion of forest policies were based on certain groups of very common principles concerning welfare and wellbeing through forests; democratic legitimacy; distributive justice; core regime principles; good governance; and fair markets as well as values related to nature conservation and sustainable development, which of the last ones are titled as environmental legitimacy in this study (Table 9). Some infrequent observations related to retributive justice and restorative justice were also made. Restorative justice was found as a source of legitimacy with no exception while retributive justice was found to serve both as a source of legitimacy or illegitimacy, depending on context; however these rare arguments were not further analyzed in this study.

The frequencies of all classes of legitimacy were highest in the Vihreä lanka journal, mostly because nature conservation and forest professionals had written almost all of the texts using their broad vocabulary of political arguments and, on average, the texts were

also much longer than in any other paper. In Maaseudun tulevaisuus, there was slightly more discussion on the distributive issues and significantly less on environmental issues than in other newspapers.

In general, the negative performance evaluations were more common than positive or mixed evaluations. The negative evaluations were most common when the principles of fair distribution, democracy, and fair markets were used. The evaluations using the principles related to welfare and environment were more evenly distributed between positive, negative, and mixed classes, but the negative evaluations were most common in these classes, as well. The negative evaluations related to distributive justice were more common in Maaseudun tulevaisuus but in other papers no significant differences were found. Some of the mixed evaluations took alternative points of view into consideration, even philosophically, while a minor proportion was somewhat disorganized. 52% of all observations were negative while 26% were positive and 22 % mixed.

5.3.2 Core regime principles

Core regime principles, which are rule-based arguments — often also called liberal-democratic values or political rights — were used as sources of legitimacy in all newspapers reviewed. The principles related to domestic, EU-level, and international legality were commonly applied in the evaluation of nature conservation policies as sources of legitimacy; however, there was a minority that perceived international and EU-level environmental legislation as illegitimate because it has been introduced in a top-down manner — this minority preferred national independence in the decision-making. The good international standing of Finland and its forerunner status both in the meanings of forest-related morality and the advanced utilization of forests, as well as the country's ability to compete internationally, were very common principles in the evaluations of both forest and nature conservation policies. Freedom of speech, equality, separation of powers, and lack of corruption were also occasionally mentioned as sources of legitimacy; the Constitution was mentioned as a guarantee of these values.

Table 9. Distribution of different sources of legitimacy and shares of positive (+), negative (—), and mixed (+/—) evaluations, % texts.

	Turun sanomat	Vihreä lanka	Maaseudun tulevaisuus	Helsingin sanomat	Average	Which of		
						+	—	+/—
Welfare and wellbeing	87	91	89	93	90	32	41	27
Environmental legitimacy	71	96	45	86	68	25	44	31
Democratic legitimacy	58	91	55	59	59	24	63	13
Distributive justice	42	70	61	38	48	15	68	17
Good governance	21	52	37	35	33	33	52	15
Core regime principles	18	35	19	29	22	23	52	24
Fair markets	7	30	12	9	13	21	63	16

Values that were very typical to the Finnish forest discussion were the rights of private ownership and everyman's right (the traditional right to free access and to gather berries and mushrooms, also on private land); both of these served as strong supporting arguments for current institutions. An exception to this was a line of argumentation in which some forest owners challenged contemporary broad everyman's rights in a discussion where new property taxes were proposed to owners. Despite the common use of private property rights as a supporting argument, the forests were also commonly perceived as national heritage in the meaning of collective entity, which should not be wasted by thoughtless and short-sighted policies or decisions.

Traditions were mentioned as a source of legitimacy only rarely, while its antonym modernity was mentioned slightly more often as a justification of policies.

5.3.3 Welfare and wellbeing

The welfare of citizens and the nation, along with other economic arguments, were the most common justifications used in the legitimacy evaluations. Export incomes were a very common justification for policies. The ability to maintain or improve employment was also one of the most common attributes cited for good forest and nature conservation policies. Sustainable wood production was regularly mentioned in these contexts. The welfare-related arguments came always in the form of common or group-level good; in addition to the nation, the private (small scale) forest owners and those living in their farm in the countryside were mentioned often. No arguments related to the writers' personal benefit were found in the public discussion.

Benefits from recreation use and nature tourism were also mentioned often as a supporting argument for policies. Many writers also justified nature conservation by the benefits to people, communities, and business life.

Economic growth was a topic that divided opinions; for some it was a source of legitimacy and for others a source of illegitimacy that was often associated with unsustainable development. The orientation toward the market economy was also a disputed argument but the fair markets were often mentioned as a source of legitimacy. In addition to effective markets, ecological efficiency was also mentioned as a source of legitimacy.

The discussion on how forests can enhance the quality of people's lives was a smaller but significant topic related to welfare. This was often associated with the recreational use of forests and nature tourism.

5.3.4 Environmental legitimacy

The principles related to nature conservation and sustainable development that were applied in the evaluation policies were gathered under the title of environmental legitimacy in this study. The nature-related evaluations were very common and comprised the second-largest group of all. One of the most common legitimizing arguments was ecological sustainability and a phrase familiar from international agreements and forest legislation — namely "economic, ecological and social sustainability" — was often repeated; cultural sustainability was also occasionally mentioned. The meanings of social and cultural sustainability were left vague. Environmental legitimacy was often understood through the limiting of human activities by using appropriate policies. Intrinsic values of nature were mentioned explicitly only on rare occasions.

A common argument related to welfare and the wellbeing of future generations, especially via nature conservation, combines ideas of benefits to humans and value of nature with distributive justice. There was also discussion on who is allowed to represent future generations with regard to nature, and define nature-related values; in this context the divide between urban and rural populations was often mentioned.

5.3.5 Democratic legitimacy

Democracy in a general form was a strong source of legitimacy in numerous writings, while autocratic forms of government served as a metaphor of a severe type of illegitimacy when associated in some forms of policy-making in some relatively rare texts. Over one tenth of the texts in the data mentioned the popular participation or representation of involved groups of people as a source of legitimacy. The arguments supporting public deliberation in forest-related decision-making were even more common, and a number of principles related only to quality of information in public deliberation were expressed; these include logicality, giving reasons and evidence, criticality, and honesty. Other common legitimizing principles in the agenda-setting stage included presenting and considering different alternatives as well as prioritizing the most urgent matters.

Conciliatory decision-making as well as majoritarian decision-making were most often considered supportive of the legitimacy of the decision-making procedure but some writers appreciated a non-compromising attitude to political participation and opposed "watered-down political compromises". In addition to the principle of urgency in setting agendas, the proper schedule of the process (the right speed in decision-making) represented another time-related argument supporting legitimate decisions. Direct action as a form of participation and the dominance of actors perceived as extremists served as sources on illegitimacy with no exception. Many texts associated direct action with several non-democratic forms of government and well-known dictatorships and with extreme forms of behavior, which served as sources of illegitimacy for these actors; this kind of pejorative use of language and sometimes even a vulgar style was found only in Turun sanomat and Maaseudun tulevaisuus among the sources studied.

The participation of experts was in general found to improve the legitimacy of decision-making. However, some writers found (perceived) dominance structures to be sources of illegitimacy; these include dominance by elites, administration, charismatic persons, religious ideologies, market economy, (big) companies, environmental organizations, single-issue movements, and also excessive dominance by experts.

The moral responsibility of decision-makers was found to be one of the most common arguments supporting democratic legitimacy. This was followed by the accountability and commitment of decision-makers — the latter refers to ability to make binding decisions. The other important qualities of the outcomes of the process included credibility, comprehensiveness, and understandability. The possibility to appeal a given outcome was also mentioned regularly.

5.3.6 Distributive justice and fair markets

Arguments related to distributive justice were also relatively common in the data. Most of these were related to benefits — and especially to economic benefits — but less tangible benefits related to recreation and nature conservation were also discussed. However, these arguments are more difficult to interpret and code in watertight categories than other value arguments because the justification principle was most often not specified.

Distribution was most often analyzed through different groups of people and divisions between them. These divides included Finnish countryside vs. cities, Finland vs. foreign countries, forestry vs. other forest user groups (nature conservationists, recreation users and among them especially moose hunters, and reindeer herders), and present vs. future generations.

Concerning the distribution of welfare through markets, the rules of fair competition were often mentioned as a source of legitimacy, while monopolies and cartels were mentioned as sources for the illegitimacy of policies. However, the fairness of actual markets were often disputed.

Many of the distributive arguments related to taxation in general and especially to fair taxation of different citizen groups. In general, the taxation of incomes from forestry was evaluated very negatively and the new tax system was almost never assessed to be fair, while the old system was occasionally missed. The fairness of subsidies granted to land-owners for forest improvement activities also split opinions.

Another related burden was the perceived responsibility to keep the Finnish forest sector functioning. A fair distribution of unspoiled nature between present and future generations was mentioned occasionally.

A third line of argument related to the fairness of the raw wood market and the distribution of benefits from the forest industry among forest owners, shareholders of companies, and workers in the logging chain and in the industry. Also, the fair shares between those living in cities and in the countryside — perceived to have opposite interests — clearly split opinions. This type of discussion was common especially in the newspaper Maaseudun tulevaisuus, a mouthpiece for the Central Union of Agriculture Producers and Forest Owners (MTK).

5.3.7 Good governance

Concerning the good governance, many texts emphasized that public officials must obey domestic and international legislation themselves. On the other hand, they were expected to oversee the implementation of laws in an impartial and consistent manner. On the contrary, the arbitrariness and the discretionary nature of decisions were perceived as illegitimate; the same applies to perceived paternalism (as opposed to encouragement), cumbersome bureaucracy, lack of competence, and disrespectful behavior by officials. The officials' communication with citizens was expected to be comprehensible. Both forest and nature conservation-related public administrations faced criticism. The cost efficiency of public administrations was supported but proposed privatizations and organizing services through public competitions between private actors split opinions.

6 DISCUSSION

The conceptual framework (Figure 2 with analyses in sections 2.1-2.4) developed in this study is based on a relatively extensive consideration of theories in several key disciplines in academic political studies, which provide a broad selection of perspectives and different interpretations on the research subject, namely the legitimacy of forest-related policies. The framework is pluralistic in the sense that it allows theories from different disciplines, such as political science and the psychology of legitimacy and political philosophy, to be applied as a part of empirical analysis if they are found valid, i.e. a fit between the theoretical proposition and an observation can be found. In my understanding, the framework is relatively comprehensive and covers the most relevant dimensions of legitimacy. There is some overlap especially between theories of democracy and procedural justice, but I consider it interesting to find that these theories from different scholarly traditions operate with quite a similar understanding of the phenomena and similar principles have been codified in particular governmental institutions on a practical level, as well. However, most of the dimensions in the framework are clearly separate. The framework is general and aims to avoid partisan fixations so it can be applied in principle in any other policy sector.

Furthermore, the framework made possible a link between the selected relative abstract theories and real life observations. The theoretical entities that were included both facilitate the discovery of relevant observations, and also in processing interpretations if theoretical presuppositions are not allowed to dominate the analysis excessively; the theoretical understanding may also support the reflections of a researcher's personal prejudices and other possible sources of bias.

Moreover, theories serve as points of comparison themselves and facilitate comparisons between empirical studies of different subjects. When broad, the conceptual framework also makes it easier to recognize which dimensions of legitimacy may be missing from certain data. This may be especially important in future studies of public discussion, when the data sources are more often discussions on social media and other Internet, which on one hand provides a multivocal online public sphere, but on the other hand allows fragmented and affective discursive struggles (cf. Porttikivi 2016).

The conceptual analysis was supported by developing theoretical frameworks based on central studies of legitimacy in political science and on revising them for the purposes of empirical analysis (Tables 2, 3, 4 and Figure 4; see also Figure 2 in Article I). The general starting point for the analysis of legitimacy theories in political science was that the objects of political support have been insufficiently separated in empirical studies on legitimacy (Norris 1999; Linde & Ekman 2003). The empirical assessment suggested that the revised classification concerning the objects of support (Table 3) facilitates the separation of objects and sources of legitimacy. The analysis explicated the double role of regime values and institutions as both patterns (sources) of legitimacy and objects of legitimacy evaluations. Constitutions and international legal institutions often appear to serve as sources of legitimacy (Figure 4).

When considering the overall framework that uses classifications of welfare, environment, democracy, distributive justice, good governance, fair markets, and core regime principles, a very similar approach that has been developed independently from legitimacy studies was found in the literature of evaluation studies (Vedung 1997; Bemelmans-Videc & Vedung 1998). Overall legitimacy consists of both procedural and

substantial dimensions. As Scharpf (1999: 12) notes, input and output-oriented legitimacies "coexist side by side, reinforcing, complementing, and supplementing each other".

Following Scharpf (1997, 1999) and other prominent studies of legitimacy, this study also applied the divisions of input and output legitimacy, but added a throughput dimension (Schmidt 2006, 2015) in order to explicate decision rules (cf. Abromeit & Stoiber 2007: 42-47; Engelen et al. 2008: 9-11). The classification regarding patterns of legitimacy (Table 4) was found to support a comprehensive understanding of legitimacy's dimensions. Even though there are such principles, such as accountability and openness, not to mention equality — which are difficult to isolate definitively into only one category — most principles seem to be organized into relatively fitting positions in the classification. The separation of political rights and other general values into core regime principles appears to do justice to the different natures of these arguments; closely similar approaches are the separation of "regime values" by Easton (1965: 194-200) and "basic freedoms" by Saward (1994: 16). However, it is important to note that this classification is analytic by nature and different — equally or even better justified — classifications may be found in some other studies.

The descriptive conceptions of ideology were also tested in the empirical analysis. The conceptions found in the literature (Ball & Dagger 2002; Freeden 1996; Heywood 1998), using liberalism, socialism, and conservatism as major classifications, were found to be difficult to associate with both media and interview data; they may be more useful, for instance, in the analysis of political parties. However, plenty of similarities between theories of democracy as well as environmental justice and empirical observations were found.

It is a pity from the point of view of the quality of philosophical argumentation that — despite the fact that philosophers actually make a lot empirical claims on human nature and behavior as well as on the state of current societies as part of their analysis — they seldom if ever use reliable empirical knowledge, despite the abundance of reliable knowledge available today. In order to make a perfect state, one surely needs to know the wants and circumstances of the humans for whom it is to be designed.

In general, many different groups of citizens, involved more or less intensively in different forest activities, participated in the public discussion on forests. Quite large numbers of individuals shared the overall publicity despite the fact that there were some very active writers repeating their message in an almost obsessive manner. But even if some of the discussants would not be willing to learn from one other, the wider audience may learn to form opinions concerning forest policy by following the discussion; in this sense the importance of public discussion is much broader than may be understood by merely observing the participating citizens.

However, the participation of governmental officials may be characterized as insufficient considering their importance in the implementation of policies, and especially if the formation of legitimacy is supposed to happen in dialogue between citizens and those in office as e.g. Weber (1920/1968), Beetham (1991), and many other theorists propose. Actually, similar demands can be found in the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) which, according to Mäenpää (2008: 84), states that an obligation of public administration is to convey information to citizens on its own initiative.

Nature conservation officials especially showed a very low rate of participation in the discussion concerning the alleged shortcomings of nature conservation policies, while the representatives of nature conservation organizations acted in my media data in a major role; for example, in the legitimating of the EU's Natura 2000 nature conservation program.

Because of minimal communication and several other reasons related to problems in the implementation of administrative procedures and in the organization of possibilities for public participation, the Natura 2000 program became a biggest legitimacy crisis related to forests and other natural areas for many decades; see details in the report of the Supreme Audit Institution (Valtiontalouden... 2006).

According to the description in the report mentioned, the problems of Natura 2000 were especially failures in the area of procedural justice, which emphasizes that the procedures should be more closely considered in the forest and nature conservation sectors, both in practice and through future research. Similar problems of implementation of the same program have occurred in many parts of Europe (see Julien et al. 2000 and articles in the volume Keulartz & Leitztra 2008). According to procedural justice (Leventhal 1980), wrong decisions should be corrected, but it may be especially difficult or at least very slow in the case of EU-level legislation.

The almost complete absence of the forest industry in public discussion conducted in major print media can be described as very strange indeed, compared to its intensive participation in the preparation of political programs and considering the industry's importance to the country and the criticism it has faced. It is obvious that the industry has other, more direct channels to influence forest policies, especially directly to decision-makers in power, at least domestically (see the detailed analyses by Kuisma et al. 2014 and Siltala 2018). However, that kind of direct participation does not support political communication with people, neither as involved citizens nor as conscious consumers.

In comparison with propositions of potential participants in the public discussion (Rezsohazy 2001; Berg 1988; Steffek 2009), some participants, such as biologists and economists, were found similar to the expectations, but professional groups of artists, philosophers, diplomats, and clerics were absent from the data.

Of the data sets, the letters to editors from print media represented so-called naturally occurring data; that is, the data has been produced without the interference of a researcher, while the interviews were semi-structured and therefore observations were at least partly affected by the stimulus of the study itself. The letters to editors have been selected by the editors and therefore they should not be interpreted as representing public opinion as such. Richardson (1997: 151-153) proposes that the writers of published letters have been found to be older, better educated, wealthier, and more politically conservative than their fellow newspaper readers. There was no information available to make such exact comparisons in this study but at least both large and small environmental organizations that probably represent the central organized groups of citizens who are against the mainstream appeared to be relatively well represented especially in the biggest newspaper, Helsingin sanomat. In contrast to the abovementioned propositions, the participation of representatives of the forest industries and professional organizations was almost non-existent in the data. The newspapers represented clearly different audiences, which can be expected to improve the representativeness of different points of view and the principles applied in argumentation.

In general, the media data was very fragmentary while the interviews produced data that answered the research questions more directly and more easily. The media data included a huge number of different topics, which is understandable because in Finland the amount of interests and interest groups related to varying aspects regarding forests is so large; not to mention their huge economic importance, as described in sections 1.1-1.3. Furthermore, there are at least tens of forest-related governmental institutions (each consisting of numerous minor rules), which all can be subjects of legitimacy evaluation, even when the organizations are framed out as in this study. It would have been possible to limit analysis

only to some institutions, such as forest law or nature conservation law, but then the data sampling should have been completely different in order to acquire a sufficient amount of data. Focusing on single institutions may also have provided a narrower perspective to overall legitimacy; one observation in this study is that many of the evaluations of forest policies are not very specific, but are focused on forest or nature conservation policy in general. If I would have focused on single institutions, common evaluations of this kind would not have been found. On the other hand, the comprehensive data sampling used in this study makes it impossible to focus on the legitimacy of single institutions in very close detail.

The strength of the interviews was that they provided detailed data exactly on those questions of interest. This especially facilitated the revealing of which topics were most conflicted and in what manner, possibly indicating that some of the conceptions are essentially contested as proposed below.

The phenomenon of legitimation appears to be more complex than has been assumed — the empirical studies found much more principles than seemed to be indicated by the theory analysis. Many theoretical studies appear to operate with a much shorter list of principles, and this applies not only to philosophy but also to empirically-oriented theorization both in political science and in the psychology of legitimacy. It appears that if analysis is limited only to contents that theories already include, it results in a more limited understanding of the variety of real-life legitimation arguments. Without explorative empirical studies, it is difficult to know which of the theoretical ideas may have some importance for citizens in some context and which are insignificant for the perceived legitimacy.

The principles that were named as core regime principles in this study were found relatively frequently in the data. However, many of the principles related to basic freedoms or human rights were mentioned only occasionally, probably indicating that no major crises in these issues currently exist in the culture, and values are "sleeping" to be evoked in some other context or in another historical moment. Corruption and other criminal activities were mentioned only in some single texts while in some other conditions crimes (such as illegal loggings and other wrongdoings related to deforestation) may be important topics in the legitimacy evaluations (cf. Pardo 2000; Arts et al. 2013).

It was not at all surprising that economic and environmental issues were major topics in the legitimacy discussion, as found in numerous other studies (e.g., Lester 1989; Pepper 1997; Doyle &McEachern 1998; Harre et al. 1998; Rootes 1999; Myerson & Rydin 2004; Rekola et al. 2010). In the analyses of print media in Canada, Stoddart (2005) and Driscoll (2006) have found very similar discussions in the news section and Hessing (2003) in the letters of editors section. Bengston et al. (1999) have found economic and environmental values to be important in the content analysis of print media in the USA but the recreational values were found to be even more important there. Satterfield (2001) have found similar essential differences related to the definitions of environmental values in the USA. In Finland, Harrinkari et al. (2016,2017) have found in the studies of advocacy coalitions related to the revision of Finnish Forest Act in 2010–2013 that there was forestry and administrative coalitions which derive their normative beliefs from the forest paradigm while environmental coalition derives its beliefs from the environmental paradigm. These differences have led to polarization between rival coalitions, minimal communication, and a long-term disagreement about major questions in the subsystem, which are very similar results as the findings concerning lack of trust in the Article III (see also Hellström & Reunala 1995; Hellström 2001). Of these coalitions, the forestry and administrative

coalitions showed only a low participation rate in the public discussion in the data of this study.

Quality of life seems to be connected to both benefits and environmental issues, and it may be an emerging line of argumentation, but not yet very significant in my data. There seems to be a growing interest in perceived wellbeing and happiness among economists (Stiglitz et al. 2009), as well. However, the tendency to transform values attached to forests into the language of utility, particularly into economic terms, has also been recognized by Vatn & Bromley (1995) and Bromley & Paavola (2002). The novel concept of a bioeconomy may be a logical consequence of the same thinking, in which all benefits from nature are summed up, including benefits from recreation and nature tourism, see the Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy (Ministry... 2014) and the Finnish forest statistics of bioeconomy in Vaahtera (2018: 164-175), and also Pülzl et al. (2014), Ollikainen (2014), Kleinschmit et al. (2017), Peltomaa & Kolehmainen (2017), and Mustalahti (2018).

The intrinsic value of nature was mentioned only in occasional texts, despite the fact that during the research period there was quite lot of academic discussion on the different definitions of values of nature (Oksanen & Rauhala-Hayes 1997; Oksanen 1998; Haapala & Oksanen 2000) and they were also applied in the interviews of organized nature conservation activists (Article III). However, it is important to note that the intrinsic values have been institutionalized in the Constitution of Finland (731/1999) from 1995 (Kuusiniemi 2020), possibly more likely as a consequence of international than domestic discussion (see HE 309/1993).

On the values related to environment and natural resources, the terms related to sustainable development appeared to be very well internalized by many discussants, despite the continued ambiguity of the concept of social sustainability — it seemed to be a useful class for almost any other demand falling outside the classes of the environmental and economic.

One peculiar detail in the Finnish environmental discussion is that one animal, namely Siberian flying squirrel was a topic or at least mentioned in as much as eight percent of the full number of letters to editors despite the fact that it even does not belong to class of the most endangered species and it can be found commonly, for instance, in the areas of many cities. However, due to its status in the EU legislation it can be effectively (ab)used in the demands for protection of forests and parks by the environmental organizations and local inhabitants.

Furthermore, it is hardly surprising that the right of forest ownership and at the same time the traditional everyman's right were commonly supported. Despite the potentially conflicting nature of these rights, neither of these are seriously challenged; one reason for this may be the relatively low population and low competition between different forms of nature, especially in more remote areas of the country. Many of Finland's several hundred thousand forest owners are also themselves recreational users of forests.

Despite claims that the Finnish forest sector has been legitimized by traditional values (which some environmental actors, for example, proposed in the interviews of Article III), this source of legitimacy — already described in early legitimacy studies by Weber (1914/1968) — was not found to be a significant topic in the discussion. but the counter-argument with reference to modernity turned out to be a bit more common. Charismatic legitimacy, one of Weber's three sources of legitimacy, was on the contrary considered a (rare) source of illegitimacy in my data. However, Weber's rational-legal legitimacy (governance based on law and effective public administration) was highly relevant in the

data, and in fact forms a foundation for rational forest governance and for the liberal democratic state as we know them today.

In general, most of the argumentation was focused on the common good. Almost no text referred to vested interests or personal benefit (which is supposedly, at least according to economics, the primary moving force of individuals). This does not mean that these writers do not have their own interests but the unwritten rule that the demands have to be justified in some terms related to the common good or at the minimum with reference to some group interest seems to prevail in the public discussion. Elster (2008) and Gosseries & Parr (2018) also maintain that publicity in general forces the participants of the discussion to present their views in the language of reason and the common good. However, forthcoming studies could study these phenomena in the social media and other online discussions, which may in some contexts rather polarize political positions than serve as a "civilizing force" of public discussion, as Elster (2000) has proposed (concerning the discussion in more traditional media).

Democratic legitimacy was an important source of (il)legitimacy both in the public discussion and in the interviews. Hurrelmann et al. (2005a, 2005b) and Schneider et al. (2007) have also found that democracy is a common source of legitimation of governmental institutions in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and Switzerland. Article II provides a detailed report of over 40 principles related to democratic legitimacy found in public discussion. The study also found that over 30 principles related to rationality, fairness, and the reliability of information were regularly used in the evaluation of the quality of public deliberation. It was an interesting finding that analyses of a large data set of public discussion and a broad (relatively theoretical) literature on democracy in parallel seem to produce a quite similar understanding of the principles of democracy. Furthermore, the results concerning democratic legitimacy were very similar to basic findings in social psychology on procedural justice, which is focused on the fairness and transparency of decision-making processes. Leventhal's (1980) broadly recognized six rules of fair procedures (consistency across individuals in procedures, suppression of bias, accuracy of information, representativeness of participants in decision-making, mechanisms to correct bad decisions, and ethicality) were found to be relatively common in the evaluations of both forest and nature conservation policies.

The findings on the principles related to good governance are also closely related to procedural justice. Most of the principles found have been institutionalized in Finnish legislation on administration (Mäenpää 2008). A similar but more extensive definition for good governance has been introduced by the United Nations (2020).

Findings on distributive justice cannot be associated with specific principles in respective theories quite as easily. The distribution of burdens related to economic losses from nature conservation in the lands of small-scale private forest owners seem not be commonly discussed in the literature of environmental justice (see, e.g., the volumes by Dobson 1998, 1999; Dobson & Eckersley 2006) which may have a tendency to underline harms caused by the (ab)use of nature (such as pollution) than from limitations of different forms of use, even though some of the forest owners may be relatively poor and dependent on the incomes from felling. However, the academic discourse of political theorists concerning the rights of future generations and identifying the legitimate agencies for absent parties (e.g., Saward 2006) was found relatively common also in the media data. It is good to note that almost anything can be attempted to be justified not only in the name of hypothesized future people but also contemporary categories of people who have not been

effectively organized, not to speak of different non-human species who literally have no voice of their own in the human discussion.

Evaluations concerning the taxation of incomes from forestry were exceptionally negative. Another disputed issue is the perceived fairness of the market, which is a central mechanism in the forest sector not only in the distribution of benefits in market exchange but also in the allocation of the profits to the future investments. The chain involves a large number of actors who have their concrete role in transferring the raw wood to the industrial process, and finally into products that may be sold in the international markets for a competitive price. The principles of fair distribution between the involved groups in commercial forest production are commonly disputed; this should be studied more in the future, as it seems to be a central source of disagreement among the hands-on actors within the forest sector.

The negative performance evaluations of forest policy institutions were two times more frequent than positive ones while there was almost as much mixed as there was positive evaluations. Hurrelmann et al. (2005a, 2005b) and Schneider et al. (2007) also found a similar tendency in many countries but not as strong as in this study. It is unclear whether this should be interpreted as a sign of the illegitimacy of the policies or as a characteristic of public discourse in readers' letters, which focused rather on criticizing than praising the public policy-making (cf. Schneider et al. 2007: 138-143).

In some cases, an intensive public discussion was found to precede an institutional change, as Phillips et al. (2004) propose. In my data, such cases include renewals of the Forest Act (1093/1996) and the Act on the Financing of Sustainable Forestry (1094/1996) as well as reforms of legislation on the Forest Centre (Laki Suomen metsäkeskuksesta 2011/418) and forest management associations (Laki metsänhoitoyhdistyksistä 1998/534). It is, however, difficult to estimate exactly how strong an impact the public demands may have had on the results of reforms — but at least it can be said that the relaxation of legislation concerning private forests and increasing the competition in the provision of forest-related services are in line with the mainstream of discussion observed.

One of the most detailed studies concerning legitimacy of Finnish forestry is Valkeapää (2014), who found that the legitimacy of forest policy is generally at a relatively high level, despite various practices, especially clearcutting, being criticized. A relatively broad discussion of felling methods was also found in my data but there were arguments both for and against clearcutting; however, these practices were not analyzed further in this study. The Finnish Forest Association has conducted nine population-level surveys on satisfaction in current forestry and nature practices and operation volumes in 1998-2006 (Finnish... 2016, 2019), and over time most people have been relatively satisfied with the current situation and applications of the same questions, focused on a local level and directed at the younger generations, have accumulated similar results. According to a recent survey by Natural Resources Institute Finland, the forest owners' satisfaction concerning the contemporary methods of silviculture have increased from 59% to 66% in the period of 2011-2018, most likely due to relaxation of legislation regarding private forests (Kniivilä et al. 2020).

Valkeapää (2014) has also proposed that those who are most competent in forest issues support forestry (or forest policies) less. This is in contrast with general Finnish legitimacy studies; e.g. Bäck et al.(2018: 386-397) maintain that on an individual level the most important explanatory factors in positive legitimacy evaluations are civic competence and an interest in politics. One explanation for the difference may be a failure in the interpretation of self-perceived competence because prominent psychological studies

maintain that those people who actually have least competence on a given issue have the greatest positive bias in their subjective understanding of their competence due to a lack of metacognitive skills (Kruger & Dunning 2003; Dunning et al. 1999). Related to the same study, we may also discuss whether system justification theory — based on the Marxist theory of "false consciousness", which maintains that people in some conditions support the system against their own objective interest — is relevant in the context of Finnish forest policy, even without an objective measure of either personal interests nor of competence (cf. analysis of "false consciousness" by Zelditch 2001). Furthermore, it is not clear what the "system" is in a forest context from the point of view of forest owners, for instance, who have faced regulation both from domestic forest and nature conservation legislation and programs, and by several EU-induced nature conservation programs that have focused especially on rural areas, where opposition to Finland's EU membership was strongest (Valtiontalouden... 2006).

Some of the most typical attributes of legitimate forest and nature conservation policies seem to be strongly associated with a certain forerunner status and a positive international reputation through advanced forestry and compliance with international agreements; the same findings were made in both the media data and in the interviews. A related argument that may have an ego-supporting or sometimes even a slightly paranoid tone was that the events in Finnish forestry would be monitored intensively from abroad. However, in the case of Natura 2000 there was pressure from the EU to implement the program on schedule and the EU also follows up agricultural activities of farm owners who are often also forest owners (Valtiontalouden... 2006).

The idea of Finland as a leading country in forest policy has also been reflected in the National Forest programme 2015 (Ministry... 2008), in which the vision is "Finland — a forerunner in sustainable forestry" and in the National Forest Strategy 2025 (Ministry... 2019), which states that Finland is a forerunner in the conservation of threatened habitat types following the international criteria revised in 2018 (IUCN Red List of Criteria for Ecosystems). The program also holds that the "forest-based business and activities sector is a responsible forerunner, engages in open and active communication and the sector's image is positive internationally". The Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy (Ministry... 2014) also states that "Finland to the forefront of a sustainable bioeconomy" and "[...] we can be the forerunners in grasping the growth opportunities offered by the bioeconomy". It seems to be that the Finns want that their country would be the best in the world also in forestry and nature conservation policies.

In the future, international and EU-level policies may have an increasing impact on national policies. When writing this in October 2020, it seems to be evident that changing EU policies and especially the EU Green Deal (European... 2020) will influence national forest-related policies, but the precise manner is not currently known (European... 2020; Simon 2020; Feindt et al. 2020).

7 CONCLUSIONS

> A forest policy will not satisfy everybody, nor should it aim doing so. Claims on the forest often conflict. What has often happened in the past is that the groups able to exercise most influence have asserted their own claims over others'. The forestry profession, to its credit, *has* had some success in protecting forests for future generations; today's foresters should also take up the cause of the weaker sections of society dependent on the forest.
>
> Jack Westoby in *Introduction to World Forestry:People and theirTrees* (1989), emphasis by author.

I hope that I have been able to provide some understanding on the meaning of legitimacy and how its different forms pertain to the Finnish forest discussion. I also hope that the ideas of this study will be further tested in future studies. Some parts of this dissertation merely scratch the surface of large theory bases but may still be able to give useful clues to researchers interested in legitimacy issues and the directions in which the academic discourse could proceed.

However, there is one more important issue not yet addressed. Many of the most important conceptions related to legitimacy, such as democracy and justice, have been depicted as essentially contested concepts, which means that disagreements on values are not only linguistic confusions but part of the disagreements may be real and genuine (Gallie 1956; Solum 2020a, 2020c). Considering the observations of this study, it appears that many of the social values underlying legitimacy are somewhat generally accepted and they are attributed somewhat similar meanings. It is also important to note that the criteria of essentially contested concepts themselves are controversial in philosophy (Collier et al. 2006; see also Hurrelmann et al. 2007a) and in theoretical studies of law (Solum 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). Nonetheless, the same phenomenon has been found also in social psychology: a value concept may be clear in abstract terms but definitions are open to multiple translations into concrete terms and different people may differ in their judgments (Mikula 2001).

In the context of this study, some candidates for essentially contested concepts or at least normative sources of disagreement can be named. A primary candidate is the concept of welfare: Should it be defined more in economic terms or in terms of wellbeing or quality of life? Related to welfare, the relation to economic growth is also a major source of disagreement. The actors interviewed also understood the value(s) of nature in fundamentally different ways. The fair distribution of the cost of nature conservation between citizen groups and between nations as well as of benefits in the forest sector was also disputed. The rights of future generations are also under discussion.

Among the forms of participation identified, direct action was widely criticized both in media and in the interviews, but some of the environmental actors supported it as an effective form of social influence; see Rantala (2004c) for a more detailed analysis (note that direct action should not be confused with citizens' direct participation and ideals of deliberative democracy, which appear to enjoy broad support). Influencing through (foreign) media was another form of participation that was supported by environmental actors but was strongly criticized as populist by forestry actors. Despite a conciliatory political culture where agreement has been traditionally pursued through incremental changes (Saastamoinen 1998), there seem also to be different ways of understanding the

ideal of compromising: some take it for granted while others appreciate strictness and a non-compromising attitude to political action; this could be explored more in further studies.

Social sustainability, in all its ambiguity, may also have potential to become a new essentially contested concept, based on observations from data and my experiences of a ministerial working group focused on that issue (Rantala et al. 2006; Saastamoinen et al. 2006). The concept seems to be a difficult starting point for forest policy argumentation if it can be more or less meaningfully used in justifying almost anything, including exactly opposite policy actions. At least it can safely be said that social sustainability is seriously undertheorized. However, there is no need to reinvent, for instance, the concepts of democracy and procedural justice in the sustainability discourse because they have already been invented and supported. Bioeconomy may have potential to become a somewhat similar fuzzy political concept that stimulates a lot of discussion (see Pülzl et al. 2014; Kleinschmit et al. 2017).

It is, nevertheless, important to note that excessive focusing on disagreements may produce a biased view toward the bigger picture, and I have consciously avoided this in my studies. Despite some disagreements, most of the social values that serve as a basis for legitimacy are relatively commonly supported, at least in the case of Finland where overall support of major governmental institutions and trust among people are at a relatively high level. The contestation of values seem to at least partly be related to the so called third generation human rights, such as environmental responsibilities and rights of future generation, while the discussion of older social values, which stem from the Enlightenment of 1700s and form a basis of modern liberal-democratic society, continue as well. The value discussion related to forests is part of these much deeper discussions, which seems to continue as far into the future as I can see.

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